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WESTERN AMERICANA

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THE OVERLAND STAGE TO CALIFORNIA.

FRANK A. ROOT.

WILLIAM ELSEY CONNELLEY.

THE

OVERLAND STAGE TO CALIFORNIA.

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES AND AUTHENTIC HISTORY OF THE GREAT OVERLAND STAGE LINE AND PONY EXPRESS FROM THE MISSOURI RIVER TO THE PACIFIC OCEAN.

BY

FRANK A. ROOT,

MESSENGER IN CHARGE OF THE EXPRESS, AND AGENT OF THE POST-OFFICE DEPARTMENT
TO LOOK AFTER THE TRANSPORTATION OF THE MAILS OVER THE GREAT STAGE
LINE ACROSS THE PLAINS AND MOUNTAINS TO CALIFORNIA,

And late publisher of the Atchison *Free Press*, Atchison *Champion*, Waterville
Telegraph, Seneca *Courier*, Holton *Express*, North Topeka *Times*,
Gunnison (Colo.) *Review-Press*, and the Topeka *Mail;*

AND

WILLIAM ELSEY CONNELLEY,

AUTHOR OF "THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT OF NEBRASKA TERRITORY," "JAMES HENRY
LANE, 'THE GRIM CHIEFTAIN' OF KANSAS," "WYANDOT FOLK-LORE," "KANSAS
TERRITORIAL GOVERNORS," "LIFE OF JOHN BROWN," ETC., ETC.

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHORS.

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AND

THE HEROIC SURVIVORS OF THE DAYS
OF THE OVERLAND STAGE-COACH
ON THE GREAT PLAINS.

PREFACE.

The value of this book lies in its fidelity—in its strict adherence to truth and its faithfulness to fact. It is, first of all, a historical work, the story of an eye-witness; but in the relation of historical incidents it often touches the story of the romance of the plains. Perhaps its principal mission in the future will be to preserve the real spirit of the first gigantic enterprises of the great West. These enterprises were of much moment in their day, but were only the forerunners of greater things. The vastness of the expanse and the conditions existing upon it made it necessary to do things on a greater scale than in the settlement and development of any other portion of the continent. It has been said—and truly said—that the conquest of the great western wilderness, many of the events of which are portrayed in this volume, constitutes the most fascinating romance in all history.

Many of these events had their dangers. Sometimes they ended in tragedy, and scenes dark, bloody and pathetic as ever found expression in tale or story. To many a station did the old coaches come down the trail like the wind, sore beset by bloodthirsty savages, who, seeing the prey escape, scattered and vanished across the desert in scurrying dust clouds. Sometimes the driver was dead and the passengers were maimed. More than once the coach was left surrounded by dead and scalped travelers, a ghastly tribute to the cruelty of the savages and the perils of the plains. But the brave pioneers did not falter. They laid strong and deep the foundation of such development and growth of civilization as the world has never before witnessed.

The little hamlet of cottonwood cabins at the junction of Cherry creek and the South Platte has grown to be the "Queen City of the Plains." The pony express has been driven from the trail by the telegraph, and the stage-coaches pushed aside by the railway. Desert wastes and sweeps of blistering sand have been reclaimed and made to bloom as the roses of the valley. Men have dug into the bowels of the great mountain ranges and brought forth a stream of gold that enriches all the nations of the earth.

All these things had root in human hearts and human hands. They cost blood and treasure untold. They would have failed of accomplishment but for the courage and loyalty of the men who labored in their day to redeem and subdue the wildnerness. Some of them remain with us, and one of them, David Street, speaking of Ben. Holladay, the great overland stage route proprietor, and of the drivers employed by him on the line, in a recent letter pays a timely tribute to those heroes who labored to establish civilization in the Great West:

> "His drivers and stock tenders were the best. No storms, no dangers could daunt them. I wondered at the time, and have often wondered since, what it was that inspired them. They seemed to possess the spirit that an army does in battle. The fight was on; the bridges burned behind them, and the only thought was 'Forward!'
>
> "Many heroic deeds by agents, drivers and messengers could be recounted—of facing blizzards, plowing through snow-banks, the dangerous snow- and landslides; swimming coach and team across swollen streams; ferrying coach or team across torrents of rivers on frail boats; facing Indians on the war-path; drivers and messengers shot from the box by Indians and road-agents. I have known coaches to come in to the station with the driver dead in the front boot, the mail soaked with his blood. I recall instances where employees traveling with coaches attacked by Indians have kept up a fight for a whole day and part of a night, and, finally, with their dead and wounded on the front wheels of the coach, abandoning everything else, and, under cover of the night, making their escape to the nearest station. I remember well the circumstances of a passenger and express coach attacked by highway robbers, or, as they were called in those days, 'road-agents.' A resistance was made, resulting in the driver and messenger being shot dead from the box, with a total of three killed and six wounded out of ten persons, and the loss of $75,000 in gold dust. There was some incentive that induced these men to brave all these dangers, and I can liken it to nothing except the spirit that pervades brave men in battle."

The credit of writing the volume belongs to Mr. Root. He wished me to rewrite all the text. This I refused to do, for it would have destroyed the value of the book to a great extent. My work has been that of editor only. Some things have been omitted and others added at my suggestion, and in some instances arrangement has been changed and verification of statements made. Drawings for illustrations have been secured and arrangements for publication effected.

My refusal to disturb the text as written by Mr. Root has left some repetitions in the book, but these could not be avoided, and they are more than offset by the value retained in the personal narration of a conscientious eye-witness and participant in the stirring events of those heroic days. These repetitions are the result of the manner of Mr. Root's work on the book. He devoted the spare time of fifteen years to writing it; there are periods of years between some of the chapters. We trust this defect will be found so slight as to prove insignificant.

Mr. Root tells of his work and how he came to write it in the following statement, prepared, in all except the reference personal to myself, at my request:

> "Many years ago, when relating to a few friends some of my experiences while employed on the overland stage line, I was urged by them to write out my reminiscences and put them in book form. The suggestion did not strike me at all favorably at the time. While I had ridden long distances on the stage-coach, aggregating many thousands of miles, between the Missouri river and the Rocky Mountains, I had some hesitancy, and felt that I was in no way equal to the important literary task of writing the proposed book.
>
> "When my objections were given to my friends, they more strongly than ever urged me to go on with the work. Some of the ideas advanced by them, in due time, set me to investigating; I spent some time thinking the matter over. I thought, as a new generation had come into the world since the telegraph had taken the place of the pony express and the overland California stage had yielded to the fast railway-train, that a book at this time, detailing some of the events as they actually occurred in those early days—much of which would be new to a great majority of the people—might be read with some interest, not only by the rising generation, but

certainly by a goodly number of those who were in some way familiar with portions of the overland route. The Indian, the buffalo and other denizens of the prairies and plains have passed away, and much remains to be said of them that is instructive and interesting.

"Accordingly I wrote accounts of matters I thoroughly understood, and began to collect certain facts concerning which I was only partially familiar, to see what could be done. I made copious notes at odd times, and at leisure hours began writing them out. Soon it appeared in a number of publications that I was writing a book on 'Overland Staging Days,' and expected soon to publish it. Afterwards I met on the street in Topeka and talked a few minutes with my old friend, the late ex-Senator Ingalls, whom I first saw in the spring of 1859 and had known quite intimately since 1860. I always felt free to talk with him. We were boys together in early Kansas days at Atchison, when I was an employee on the old stage line, and also when I was foreman in the office of the Atchison *Champion*, working a while for him when he was one of its editors and lessees. He congratulated me upon having undertaken the task of writing my experiences as messenger on the great stage line and in the service of the Government on the plains in charge of the overland California mail.

"This encouraged me, and, somewhat reluctantly, I began the task of preparing and arranging the facts I had for the proposed volume. A number of times I thought seriously of abandoning the work. Few can have the remotest idea of the labor it has cost me. It has been a task, and a severe one. At odd hours and leisure days, it has cost me fifteen years of work. During that time I have seen and talked with hundreds of men on the subject, and I have been obliged to write not only scores but hundreds of letters to parties scattered throughout the country requesting information, with which to verify certain facts concerning which I felt there might be the least doubt. In a great many instances I have had to write from three to six letters before I could even get a reply. Others to whom I have written a number of times—and who I am certain could have given much timely information—have failed to answer a single inquiry. A number whom I addressed and who could have assisted me never answered, and they are now, I regret to learn, sleeping 'the sleep that knows no waking.' Others have been only too willing to comply with each and every request I have made for data. They have rendered valuable assistance. But, in spite of all this, had I realized at the beginning the large amount of work to be done, the almost endless task of finding photographs for illustrations, and the thousand and one other things that have helped to impede the work, the probability is that I never would have begun it.

"Fortunately for me, early in the year closing the last century I met and made the acquaintance of Mr. William Elsey Connelley, formerly of Kansas City, late of Nebraska, and now an honored citizen of Topeka, the capital of Kansas. He looked over my manuscript, and was at once convinced that I had the material for an interesting volume. Mr. Connelley is a historian, a profound student, a man of deep research and vast information, a vigorous, pleasing, conscientious and fearless writer. He has already written several good books, and is working, at great disadvantage, but with courage which any man should be proud of, on a number of others. It was not long after we became acquainted until we formed a partnership, and decided to get out, as soon as possible, a volume under the title of 'The Overland Stage to California.'"

This volume treats more particularly of that portion of the great overland route extending from the Missouri river to Denver. It is our design to write a complete record of the route from Denver to Placerville, and make of it a second volume. This we hope to do at an early day, much of the material for the second volume having been already secured.

WILLIAM ELSEY CONNELLEY.

PERSONAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

WE are under many obligations to Hon. W. Y. MORGAN, State Printer, and his business manager, Mr. W. G. DICKIE, for many acts of courtesy. And if this work proves of the historical value we anticipate, the country at large will owe a debt of gratitude to the public spirit of Mr. Morgan, for he very generously assumed a portion of the financial risk of the book. The facilities of his great State Printing House were placed at our disposal for the purpose of making the mechanical work on the book all it should be. The result is the elegant volume we now present to the public. The foreman of the house, Mr. T. B. BROWN, has assisted us greatly, his long experience in book-making enabling him to make the best possible disposition of illustrations and other perplexing typographical features. We also acknowledge our obligations to Mr. A. G. CARRUTH, the proof-reader of the State Printing House, for the painstaking care with which he did his part of the work on this volume.

Most of the drawings for the illustrations, and the cover design, were made by Mr. CARL P. BOLMAR, son of Hon. C. P. Bolmar, an early citizen of Kansas and long a resident of Shawnee county. The excellence of the drawings is the result of conscientious hard work. Mr. Bolmar is a young artist of exceptional ability; he was born in Topeka, and is on the staff of the *Kansas State Journal*, Topeka.

A few drawings were made by Miss LENORE CLARK, late of Jackson county, but now residing in Ottawa county, Kansas, from original sketches furnished by Mr. M. H. Sydenham, of Kearney, Neb.

The plates for the illustrations in this book were made by the TEACHENOR-BARTBERGER ENGRAVING COMPANY, of Kansas City, Mo., one of the largest and best houses in the West in that line. That their work is of a very superior character the fine engravings clearly show. While making the plates they became personally interested in the book, as did several of their department managers and employees, and they subscribed for a number of copies for themselves and friends.

We feel somewhat proud of the map that accompanies this book, and we believe all our readers will, for it is the first and only complete one ever made of the great overland stage route, which was practically the only thoroughfare across the western half of the continent in the early '60's. The map is an excellent piece of drawing, executed by Mr. ROY D. MARSH, a young man born in Kansas and now a citizen of Topeka. At odd hours, it required weeks of labor. A very valuable feature of the map is that it shows the Mormon route of 1847 and the old Santa Fé trail. The routes of the Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express and the Butterfield Overland Despatch are also shown, they being the first and also the last stage routes from the Missouri river across the plains to Denver. In the '50's and '60's, all of these were important routes to the Rocky Mountains and beyond.

These gentlemen, one and all, were our associates in bringing out this book, and we desire to express our appreciation of their patience, kindness, courtesy, and generous cooperation.

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Also, to the *Overland Monthly; Harper's Magazine;* the *Century; Scribner's Magazine;* the *Cosmopolitan; Frank Leslie's;* the *Herald*, *Tribune*, *World*, *Times*, *Sun*, and *Journal*, New York; the *Inter-Ocean*, *Tribune*, and *Herald*, Chicago; the *Globe-Democrat and Republic*, St. Louis; the *Tribune* and *Deseret News*, Salt Lake City;

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FRANK A. ROOT.
WILLIAM ELSEY CONNELLEY.

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"We cross the prairie as of old
Our fathers crossed the sea,
To make the West as they the East
The homestead of the free."

WHITTIER.

CHAPTER I.

THE OVERLAND MAIL.

THE discovery of gold on the Pacific coast in the latter '40's fairly set the country wild with excitement, and led to the rapid settlement of California with people from every state and territory in the Union. In fact, the rush was cosmopolitan, representing almost every nationality of the civilized globe. For a period of nearly nine years following the discovery of the precious metal, there was no time that the mail was received from the East in San Francisco more frequently than twice a month, and then by steamer, *via* the Isthmus.

The settlement of Utah by the Mormons, in 1847–'48, about the time of the discovery of gold in California, necessitated the establishment of the first mail route across the country west of the Missouri. It was called "The Great Salt Lake Mail."

The first contract to transfer this mail from the Missouri river to Salt Lake City was awarded in 1850 to Samuel H. Woodson, of Independence, Mo. It was a monthly service, by stage, and the price paid for it from July 1, 1850, to June 30, 1854, was $19,500 per year. The route was about 1200 miles long, through a country virtually a wilderness from Missouri's western border to the Salt Lake valley—the vast plains intervening, occupied by herds of buffalo and roving bands of savages.

Woodson contracted later with Utah parties to have the mail carried between Salt Lake City and Fort Laramie, where the mail from Independence met and exchanged, the service beginning August 1, 1851. At that time there was no settlement between Salt Lake and Fort Laramie except Jim Bridger's trading post at Fort Bridger. On their first trip, Little & Hanks, the subcontractors, reached Fort Laramie in nine days, without changing their animals, and there procured five unbroken Mexican mules, with which they completed their journey. In many places the road was very bad, only a rough trail being visible.

A mail route was also established in the early '50's, during the wild gold excitement in California, between Sacramento and Salt

Lake City. Trips were made over the route once a month, but at times they were very irregular; hence the service could not always be depended upon.

On July 1, 1854, service was begun on a contract for carrying this mail monthly, as originally, for four years, by W. M. F. McGraw, of Maryland, the price being $13,500 a year. It continued to grow, and afterwards became an important mail route. Some time later it was necessary to pack the mail across the plains on the backs of three mules. Three men in charge of the mail went together, each riding a separate mule. The riders were dressed in buckskin suits, much like the cowboys of the present time. It took over a month to make the trip from Independence to the Mormon capital. McGraw, on taking possession, while so many were going overland to the Pacific, expected to make the route pay from passengers, at $180 to Salt Lake City and $300 to California, but could not do it, and failed in 1856. The line was then let for the residue of the contract to a Mormon firm—Kimball & Co.—who ran it until the Mormon trouble of 1857, when the department rescinded the contract. Matters looked extremely warlike in the summer of 1857, and Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston (who was afterward commander-in-chief of the Confederate army, and killed at Shiloh), was sent by the Government to Utah. On his way he met with obstacles that forced him to spend the winter of 1857-'58 at Fort Bridger. Most of the time for conveying the mail to General Johnston's army the stages were hauled by mule teams. It was a long and hard pull; for over 1200 miles there were but three stations for changes of teams on the route. The line was started *via* the South Pass, the route taken by the Mormons across the Rockies, and some of the first California gold seekers in 1849-'50. It supplied Forts Kearney, Laramie and Bridger with mail. There was also the same kind of service on the route between Sacramento and Salt Lake, *via* Carson Valley. During the first few years the service on this overland route was said to have been very irregular at times and far from satisfactory.

The next contract for conveying the mail on this route between the Missouri river and Utah was let in 1858, to John M. Hockaday, of Missouri. General Johnston's army of 5000 men at the time were marching from their winter quarters at Fort Bridger to the Salt Lake valley. The mail was still being carried once a month, but this was deemed not often enough for "Uncle Sam" to keep advised of the army's movements; hence a contract was let for transporting the mail from the Missouri river to Utah once a week. For this service Hockaday was paid at the rate of $190,000 per annum ($15,833.33 a month). For operating this mail route—St. Joseph to Salt Lake and Salt Lake to Sacramento—the Government paid for the service $320,000, while the annual receipts from it amounted to only $5412.03. Some time during the year 1859 Hockaday disposed of the entire mail, passenger and express outfit to the well-known transportation firm of Russell, Majors & Waddell, largely interested in the "Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express." The new firm, after taking possession, consolidated the two stage lines and changed the name to the "Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express," uniting with the route already in operation between California and Salt Lake, thus making a continuous line between the Missouri river and the California terminus. Russell, Majors & Waddell operated this line until April, 1861, when there was a change; Gen. Bela M. Hughes, a distinguished lawyer of St. Joseph, was elected president of the company and assumed the sole management of it. While the line was operated by Russell, Majors & Waddell, they abandoned St. Joseph and transferred the starting-points to Leavenworth and Atchison, at which places they had large real-estate interests.

By act of Congress, August 3, 1854, a mail route was established from Neosho, Mo., to Albuquerque, N. M.; and, on March 3, 1855, a route was established from Independence, Mo., *via* Albuquerque, to Stockton, Cal. The amount paid for carrying the mail once a month from Neosho to Albuquerque and back was $17,000 per annum; and for that from Independence and Kansas City, by Albuquerque, to Stockton, monthly, the sum of $80,000 per annum was paid.

Independence was an old point, and it became a prominent town in the early days of the overland mail—one of the most important cities in the state outside of St. Louis. Since 1830 it had been the outfitting point and departure for long ox-train caravans hauling merchandise to Santa Fé and Chihuahua, and for a long time it was the best-known town in western Missouri. It was also the point of departure of Col. John C. Fremont upon a number of his exploring expeditions in the great West. While it was recognized by the pioneers as the great outfitting point for the immense trains that followed the "Old Santa Fé Trail," it was the eastern starting-point for the frontier mail routes that had just begun to reach out across the prairies and the plains to the great West and Southwest.

The first stage line to start out with the mail from this old town, standing on the high ground which overlooks the Missouri river, was in May, 1849. It was a monthly line and ran to Santa Fé, the New Mexican capital. In the library of the Kansas State Historical Society is an extract from a stray copy of the *Missouri Commonwealth*, a newspaper published at Independence a half-century ago. The extract bears date July, 1850, and gives valuable information concerning the first stage line across the plains, as follows:

"The stages are got up in elegant style, and are each arranged to convey eight passengers. The bodies are beautifully painted, and made water-tight, with a view of using them as boats in ferrying streams. The team consists of six mules to each coach. The mail is guarded by eight men, armed as follows: Each man has at his side, fastened in the stage, one of Colt's revolving rifles, in a holster below one of Colt's long revolvers, and in his belt a small Colt's revolver, besides a hunting knife; so that these eight men are ready, in case of attack, to discharge 136 shots without having to reload. This is equal to a small army armed as in the ancient times, and from the looks of this escort, ready as they are either for offensive or defensive warfare with the savages, we have no fears for the safety of the mails.

"The accommodating contractors have established a sort of base of refitting at Council Grove, a distance of 150 miles from this city, and have sent out a blacksmith, and a number of men to cut and cure hay, with a quantity of animals, grain, and provisions; and we understand they intend to make a sort of traveling station there, and to commence a farm. They also, we believe, intend to make a similar settlement at Walnut Creek next season. Two of their stages will start from here the first of every month."

There was an important mail route in 1854 between Independence and Santa Fé. The distance between the two places is about 850 miles, and the time occupied in making the trip was a month each way. An annual compensation of $10,990 was paid by the Government for carrying this important mail. The route was along the "Old Santa Fé Trail," through the Indian country, and, at times, portions of the way were infested by hostile bands of Apaches, Arapahoes, Cheyennes, Comanches, Kiowas, and Pawnees, making it extremely difficult to travel it in safety. The price paid for carrying this mail was said to have been wholly inadequate for the service then performed.

On this route it appears there was little or no protection by the Government for hundreds of miles, the only military post on the line being Fort Union, New Mexico, and it was inadequate to the task of keeping in subjection the numerous Indians occupying so vast an extent of country. The contractor complained to the department that he was carrying the mail at a great pecuniary sacrifice, on account of the hostility of the savages, and made several requests of the Postmaster-general to be released from his contract. Each request was denied. A new contract was subsequently made, however, giving him the sum of $25,000 for transporting this mail, although it was shown that it had cost him more than $30,000 per annum to carry it.

It was a terrible task to perform this work. The contractor was obliged to employ several armed men to accompany each mail train going through; and was also forced to secure more mules, more provender, more provisions, arms, and equipment. In spite of this, obstacles were met on every side. Every train that passed over the route was forced to pay toll at several places, and each was obliged to submit to whatever exaction might be levied, whilst the stealing of oxen, mules and horses was a frequent occurrence.

In 1859, up to the 30th of June, there were no less than six different routes for conveying the mails to and from California and our other Pacific possessions. The cost to the Government for operating these six routes aggregated the enormous sum of $2,184,697, while the total receipts from them amounted to $339,747.34. The highest price paid on any route was by ocean steamer from New York and New Orleans to San Francisco for a semimonthly service, the amount being $738,250, from which the annual receipts were $229,979.69.

The most singular thing about the mail route between Independence (Kansas City) and Stockton, Cal.—which was costing the Government $80,000 a year—is that the receipts from it amounted to only $1255; but, after being in operation nine months, the route was discontinued July 1, 1859. While it was continued—singular as it may appear—there were but four arrivals of through mails at Kansas City and but two at Stockton. The contractor, it appears, was not overburdened with the weight of the mail. The entire mail matter received at Stockton during the nine months consisted of but two letters and twenty-six newspapers.

From the returns at the department, it appears that but a single letter reached Stockton from Kansas City. One of the peculiarities of this service was, that "between Westport and Santa Fé—a distance of 825 miles—the route was directly along the line of another route," and it is supposed "the contractor, who was getting some $80,000 a year for carrying this light and unimportant mail, hired it carried for a trifling compensation."

The mail route between Independence and Salt Lake, owing to the threatened rebellion of the Mormons, in 1857-'58, seemed, at the time, an important route—and it was, looking at it from a military standpoint; still the income from it was little more than $5000 a year. The anticipated "war" with the Mormons having been averted, in the eyes of the department there no longer seemed a necessity for a weekly mail over this route to supply the few Government troops in camp near Salt Lake City and the three military posts on the way; hence, on the 30th of June, 1859, after reducing the service and making a very liberal allowance to the contractors, there was still a saving to the department of over $100,000 per annum.

During the winter of 1856-'57 no regular mail service was performed on the Salt Lake and Independence route, on account of the severity of the season. The postmaster at Salt Lake City contracted, however, with Messrs. Little and Hanks to carry a mail to Independence for $1500. They made the trip in seventy-eight days, having suffered severely from cold and hunger.

A vigorous shaking up was given the various Pacific mail routes by the postal powers in 1859, in consequence of which the annual expenditures were diminished nearly one million dollars.

The compensation for the ocean service between the Atlantic and Pacific coasts was, by the terms of the act of Congress, June 15, 1860, limited to the postages received on the mails conveyed. The steamships then plying between New York and San Francisco, and which had been carrying the mails, *via* the Isthmus of

Panama, peremptorily refused to accept such compensation. The main reason was that, in consequence of the diversion of a large part of the letter mail to the overland route, the postages would afford a wholly inadequate remuneration. In the meantime Congress had adjourned without taking any action on the matter. Steadily the mails to the Pacific—then consisting of over ten tons of matter each trip—were increasing and becoming more important. It was at the time an impossibility to carry it overland. The department was not a little puzzled to know what to do. Finally, Cornelius Vanderbilt came to the aid of the Government, and agreed to convey the mails by steamer until the 4th of March following, with the express assurance, however, "that the President would recommend to Congress to make to him such further allowance, over and above the postages, as would constitute a fair and adequate compensation for the service." So the bulk of the mail continued to go by the ocean route.

The rush to the new gold-mines in California went steadily forward by steamer, while more than 100,000 men, since the discoveries, had made the trip across the plains by the end of 1852. With the rapid strides the new El Dorado was then making—a progress unprecedented in the annals of civilization—and with only two mails a month from New York and the outside world, it was not to be wondered at that there should have been a persistent clamor for a direct overland mail. The idea was talked of by prominent officials all over the country; every Californian urged it; the subject was agitated by most of the leading newspapers at the time, as it had been for several years before. Finally, the subject was pressed so vigorously that an act relative to the "Overland California Mail," passed Congress in the closing hours of the session which terminated the administration of Franklin Pierce, March 3, 1857.

Under that act the Postmaster-general advertised for bids until June 30, 1857, "for the conveyance of the entire letter mail from such point on the Mississippi river as the contractors may select to San Francisco, Cal., for six years, at a cost not exceeding $300,000 per annum for semimonthly, $450,000 for weekly, or $600,000 for semiweekly service; to be performed semimonthly, weekly, or semiweekly, at the option of the Postmaster-general."

The bids were opened on the 1st of July, 1857. In all, there were nine bids received from various parties, each naming the

OVERLAND MAIL ON SOUTHERN ROUTE FOR SAN FRANCISCO. *Page 10.*

routes over which they proposed carrying the mail. Most of the bids named St. Louis as the starting-point; thence in a southwesterly direction across the country. Some of the bids, however, were on a more northerly route, *via* Albuquerque, N. M. The department, it was evident, favored and would listen to nothing but a "southern route." After carefully examining the bids, a few "observations" were submitted by the department officials in relation to the reasons which induced a preference for a southern route, which was selected. The trip was to be made within twenty-five days, in four-horse coaches, suitable for the conveyance of passengers as well as the safety and security of the mails.

The "northern route" proposed in one of the bids was for carrying the mail from St. Louis, by Independence, Fort Laramie, Salt Lake, etc. This route was not favorably considered by the post-office officials at Washington. The department had the recorded experience of many years against the practicability of procuring anything like a regular and certain service on this route. The Government had had a mail carried for years over it, and the result on file at the department then showed the most conclusive facts against its selection. As an example, it was shown that the mails for November, 1850, did not arrive until March, 1851. It was noticeable that the winter months of 1851-'52 were also very severe. It was reported by the carrier and postmaster that they started on time, but "on account of severe storms had to turn back." For February, March, and December, 1853, "the mails were impeded by deep snows." The service was also interfered with by "deep snow" during January and February, 1854, the unusual depth of snow keeping the mails back until the following April.

From the various reports submitted by the department it was shown that there had been no improvement in the service even down to the November mail of 1856, which left Independence November 1, and, on account of the "deep snow," was obliged to winter in the mountains. For four months of the year, it appears from the reports, snow caused almost an entire failure in the transportation of the mails across the plains and mountains.

These actual experiments, made for six successive years since 1850, without referring to the concurring testimony of explorers and travelers, naturally put this route entirely out of the question for the transportation of the mail overland. From the best and most reliable information obtained at that time, it was the belief of the Postmaster-general that there was no other all-the-year route between the Mississippi and the Pacific than the one chosen by the department. The Albuquerque route, like the one still further north *via* Independence, it appeared to the postal department, at that early day, was impracticable.

Little was apparently done by the department until July 2, 1857, when the Postmaster-general, after full and mature consideration, made the following order in relation to the route selected and the bid accepted:

> "12,587. From St. Louis, Mo., and from Memphis, Tenn., converging at Little Rock, Ark.; thence *via* Preston, Tex., or as nearly as may be found advisable, to the best point of crossing the Rio Grande above El Paso, and not far from Fort Fillmore; thence, along the new road being opened and constructed under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior, to Fort Yuma, Cal.; thence, through the best passes and along the best valleys for safe and expeditious staging, to San Francisco."

In the judgment of the Postmaster-general, the foregoing route was selected as combining more advantages and fewer disadvantages than any other. Among the various bids presented, it appears there was none that referred to this particular route. However, all the bidders had consented that their bids might be held and considered as extending and applying to said route. The contract was accordingly let, on July 2, and signed September 15, 1857.

It was not until a year after the contract was signed, however, that everything was in readiness—the line equipped, stations built, and all things arranged for beginning operations. The great enterprise—then believed to be one of the most important in the country—was known as the "Butterfield Overland Mail Company." The act, as passed by Congress, provided for a compensation not exceeding $600,000 per annum for semiweekly service for a term of six years. The successful bidders were John Butterfield, Wm. B. Dinsmore, Wm. G. Fargo, D. N. Barney, Hamilton Spencer and some half a dozen other prominent citizens of the State of New York.

The length of the through overland stage route—the one the company was finally obliged to accept and travel, in the form of a semicircle from St. Louis and San Francisco—was 2729 miles. The most southerly point touched on the route was 600 miles below South Pass, or nearly four degrees farther south than there was really any need of going, thereby making at least two and one-half days of extra travel.

On September 15, 1858—just one year, to a day, from the time the contract was signed—the overland letter mail, in four- and six-horse and mule Concord coaches, left St. Louis and San Francisco simultaneously on their long trip across the country between the "Father of Waters" and the "Golden Gate." The schedule time was twenty-five days, or about three days ahead of the ocean steamer.

The mail matter transported overland was composed almost exclusively of letters—postage ten cents on each half-ounce—but, through the courtesy of the mail company, a limited number of St. Louis, San Francisco and other leading dailies of the country were carried, and furnished the press as well as a few prominent officials at the eastern and western termini.

The line during those early days was splendidly equipped, having over 100 of the very best Concord stage-coaches, 1000 horses, 500 mules, and 750 men, of whom about 150 were employed as drivers.

The fare across the continent by stage was $100 in gold. On each of the first coaches that departed from either end of the line was a correspondent of one of the great New York dailies of that time. The coach going east from San Francisco made the trip through to St. Louis in a half-hour less than twenty-four days. The first stage west made the distance in an hour or two less time. Both coaches, however, were a day ahead of the schedule.

The arrival of the initial stage at either end of the route, on October 9, 1858, was hailed with delight. It was proof that the long-talked-of "overland mail" was no longer a myth, but a genuine reality—in every respect a fixed fact—and the event was celebrated in a fitting manner.

Six passengers came through to St. Louis on the first "overland mail" coach from San Francisco. The occasion of the arrival was considered an event so important that a number of speeches were made, and the first mails over the new line were escorted from the Missouri Pacific railroad depot on Seventh street to the post-office by a long procession, led by brass bands discoursing stirring music.

The arrival in St. Louis of the first overland mail from San

ARRIVAL OF FIRST OVERLAND STAGE-COACH IN SAN FRANCISCO. *Page 13.*

Francisco was also the occasion of a dispatch from Mr. Butterfield to the President of the United States, as follows:

> "JEFFERSON CITY, October 9, 1858.
>
> "*To the President of the United States:* SIR—The overland mail arrived to-day at St. Louis from San Francisco in twenty-three days and four hours. The stage brought through six passengers.
>
> JOHN BUTTERFIELD."

The President, in answer, sent the following:

> "WASHINGTON, October 9, 1858.
>
> "*John Butterfield, President, etc.:* SIR—Your dispatch has been received. I cordially congratulate you upon the result. It is a glorious triumph for civilization and the Union. Settlements will soon follow the course of the road, and the East and West will be bound together by a chain of living Americans which can never be broken.
>
> JAMES BUCHANAN."

At San Francisco the exercises planned for celebrating the important event were on a gigantic scale. Nothing was spared to make the occasion a grand and imposing one. It was one of the proudest days in the history of the far-western metropolis. An immense crowd of people, representing almost every kind of business and profession and nearly every nationality, turned out to rejoice over the glorious occurrence. Nearly all business was suspended. The result was an immense meeting, which was held October 11, 1858, when the consummation of the semiweekly overland mail arrangements and the arrival of the first Concord stage across the continent from St. Louis was celebrated in a style never before dreamed of on the Pacific coast.

In the exercises a large quantity of powder was burned; there was an imposing parade; enlivening music by brass bands; earnest and enthusiastic speeches were made by prominent officials, and resolutions passed cordially thanking the post-office department for its liberality in establishing the various overland mail routes. Flags bearing the "stars and stripes" were run up all through the city, the public buildings were decked with bunting, and the various telegraph lines terminating in the great cosmopolitan center were called into requisition to convey the "glad tidings throughout the land."

There were a number of big newspapers published in San Francisco as early as 1858. One of the leading journals—the *Alta California*—issued an extra edition at six o'clock on the evening of September 14, 1858, prepared expressly for the overland mail, copies of which were sent off on the first east-bound coach, which departed from the western coast at an early hour the following morning.

The arrival of the first Concord stage from the Mississippi valley in San Francisco was the occasion of another extra from the *Alta California*. The paper, which gave the particulars of the arrival of the overland mail, "went off like hot cakes." The "California Guards," a favorite military organization, turned out and celebrated the event by firing 200 guns.

The route overland from St. Louis was a little south of west across the country, through Springfield, Mo.; thence through Arkansas, touching at Fayetteville; thence across the Ozark mountains to Van Buren, on the Arkansas river, opposite Fort Smith, 468 miles, where the mail from Memphis was met, and both mails proceeded thence on a common line to San Francisco. A short cut was taken through the Choctaw Nation reserve in the Indian Territory. At Calvert's Ferry the Red River was crossed; thence the route was across the undiversified prairies of northern Texas, *via* Sherman, and on west to Fort Chadbourne, on a branch of the Little Colorado, in Texas. For a distance of 487 miles after leaving Sherman there were no settlements, and, fortunately, there was little or no trouble experienced from the Indians.

The mail reached Fort Belknap, Texas, 819 miles out from St. Louis, on September 23, the ninth day after its departure. Here it was found that it had been twelve hours covering the last thirty-five miles, notwithstanding it was about twenty-seven hours ahead of the time-table. The cause of the slow time in making these thirty-five miles was the obstinacy of the wild mules which the superintendent of the line was obliged to use on that portion of the route.

To the natives in that part of the country, the sight of the first Concord overland mail coach was a great surprise. They were fairly astounded with what seemed to them the unsurpassed facilities possessed by the stage company, and the apparently wonderful progress that had been made that far on the journey. The arrival of the first four-horse stage-coach which penetrated into their region marked a new era with them. Until that time they had never known any other means of conveyance and transportation than the rude carts drawn by slow, patient oxen, or riding on the backs of ponies and donkeys.

The wild part of the route commenced after leaving Chadbourne. The source of the Concha river—a tributary of the Colorado, at the edge of the "Staked Plains"—was reached after a ride of eighty miles; thence, for seventy-five miles, it was a monotonous route, with no water—hardly a tree or shrub being visible. Thence up along the level banks of the Pecos river, through the rough Guadalupe pass and across the rolling tablelands, a point a little above El Paso was reached, on the Rio Grande. It was a somewhat lonesome and tedious ride between Chadbourne and El Paso, for there was not a house or settlement for over 400 miles. There was, however, much to interest the traveler in the varied and entertaining scenery. From El Paso the route proceeded up the Rio Grande, which was forded, through the Mesilla valley and the lower part of Arizona. For 334 miles after leaving El Paso, there was little in the way of settlement except at Mesilla. A considerable portion of the route was rough—passing over numerous hills, across rugged mountains, through rough gorges, over diversified plains, and across what was called "Doubtful pass."

Leaving Tucson, the road traversed some extremely rough and rugged passes, leading directly through the Pima Indian villages, on the Gila river; thence it crossed a bend from the Maricopas wells through a forty-mile desert, striking the Gila again, which it followed nearly to its junction with the Colorado of the West. The latter was crossed a short distance below, at a town made up of a few mud houses, then known as "Arizona City." The remaining part of the route—extremely monotonous—was the most direct one taken to Los Angeles and San Francisco, crossing, in the meantime, the most tedious and worst part of the journey—the Mojave desert—a barren, sixty-mile, heavy, sand stretch in western Arizona and southeastern California.

A large number of the stations on the route were built of adobe or Mexican brick, long a favorite among the people of that part of the country. Some of them were sixty-five miles apart, though the most of them were built at an average of about ten miles.

Frequently there were unavoidable delays on the route. The stage that left San Francisco on the 27th of September—before the line had been in operation two weeks—and reached St. Louis October 30, was detained fourteen hours by a sand-storm in the Colorado desert, and two days were lost owing to high water in the Kern river, the ferry having been disabled.

According to the report of the Postmaster-general, under date of December 1, 1858—two and one-half months after the line was established—the overland mail was pronounced a triumphant success. Both its departure and arrival were announced with unbounded demonstrations of joy and exultation. A special agent of the post-office department came through on the first stage-coach that left San Francisco for St. Louis. His report was a highly important as well as an interesting document, showing—now since the lapse of over four decades—by what energy, skill and perseverance the then vast uninhabited region west of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers was first penetrated by the Concord mail stages of "Uncle Sam," and the two great oceans thus united by the longest and most important land route ever established in any country.

CHAPTER II.

THE GREAT AMERICAN DESERT, HOME OF THE BUFFALO.

A CONSIDERABLE portion of the public domain was marked on the maps a half-century and more ago as the "Great American Desert." It was a broad expanse of territory, and embraced most of the country lying west of the Missouri river now known as Oklahoma and the Indian Territory, Kansas and Nebraska, North and South Dakota, and all of Colorado lying east of the foot-hills of the Rocky Mountains. It was a region vast in extent—practically an empire of itself—taking in for more than 1000 miles north and south most of the territory from near the head waters of the great Missouri on the north to the northern line of Texas on the south. Its area embraced about 500,000 square miles, aggregating 320,000,000 acres. From east to west the region extended on an average about 500 miles between the Missouri river and the continental divide.

A great portion of this supposedly "unexplored region" was, in those early days, by many people believed to be one of the most worthless sections of country in the western world. It was known to be inhabited by various tribes of Indians, while the shaggy bison and other wild animals roamed undisturbed over the boundless area.

On a goodly portion of the land at that time there was comparatively nothing growing except short tufts of buffalo-grass, but in places farther out on the frontier a plentiful growth of cacti and sage-brush was always visible. Except along the streams that coursed through the wide expanse, there was hardly a tree or shrub, and little of anything else in the shape of vegetation. As marked on the maps so prominently at that time, it was practically an unknown region, a great portion of it thought to be about as worthless and barren as the great Sahara.

History tells us that Coronado was one of the first white men to make a journey into the heart of the "Great American Desert." He marched from Mexico to the northern boundary of Kansas (then called "Quivera") about the year 1542. Alvar Nunez Cabeca de Vaca, who, according to his records, preceded Coronado, was on the so-called "desert" about the year 1536, or six years before. That was over 350 years ago, and both explorers then described that part of Kansas through which they passed as being a region well watered, and the climate and soil the very best for all kinds of vegetation.

For about 250 years following their long trip, little or nothing is known of the vast region. Less than a century ago the "desert" portion was a part of the Louisiana tract, which was purchased from France by our Government in 1803. Its area comprises over 1,500,000 square miles, and embraces a section of country practically unparalleled in its varied and wonderful resources. The territory included in the "Louisiana Purchase" comprised at least a quarter-million more square miles than was then possessed by the United States.

A portion of this immense region was explored by Lewis and Clarke, who started up the Missouri river on their expedition to Oregon as early as 1804. Zebulon M. Pike came next, and crossed the so-called "desert" in 1806. Major Long, after whom one of the loftiest peaks in the Rocky Mountains is named, crossed in 1816. Sibley crossed it in 1825. Fremont, with his intrepid party, partially explored the "desert" twice in the '40s; Stansbury went through to Salt Lake in 1849, and others from time to time followed later.

The Mormon emigration to Utah under the prophet, Brigham Young, passed over the "desert" in 1847, and the great rush overland to the California gold diggings, following the discoveries in 1848, did much toward paving the way for establishing at intervals along the route military posts, ferries and trading points for the tremendous immigration that it was certain would shortly follow. In six weeks during the spring and summer of 1849, following the gold excitement on the Pacific slope, over 1500 wagons crossed the Missouri river on the ferries at St. Joseph. At the few towns on the river from Council Bluffs to Independence, no fewer than 27,000 men and nearly 40,000 oxen and mules were ferried across the Missouri river.

There was also a great rush overland from those points in 1850-'52, the emigration each year amounting to nearly 100,000 persons, at least one-half of whom left the Missouri river at St. Joseph. The so-called "Great American Desert" or arid region, however, remained a comparatively barren, worthless waste until in the '50's, when Congress established a monthly mail route between the Missouri river and Salt Lake and another between the Pacific and Salt Lake, the two making practically one route across the continent. Service from Independence to Salt Lake was increased to a weekly route for a few months in 1858, when the indications looked promising for a lively war between the Government and the Mormons. The time for making a round trip to Salt Lake was two months.

There was also a mail route established across the "desert" from Independence to Albuquerque, N. M., early in the '50's.

The discovery of gold on the "Great American Desert" was made in the summer of 1858, along a stream tributary to the South Platte, on the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains. In the spring of 1859, the result of the frequent discoveries led to the establishing of the "Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express," from the Missouri river to Denver, when it took ten to fifteen days and nights to go through, a distance of 687 miles, with the fare at $100.

The "Pony Express" was the next important enterprise organized and put into operation on the "desert." It made its first trip in April, 1860, and continued its flying runs across the continent twice a week between the Missouri river and Sacramento for a period of about eighteen months. The run from St. Joseph to Sacramento was eight to ten days, or little more than one-third the time then occupied by the Southern Overland Mail Company between St. Louis and San Francisco, which began in the fall of 1858, by John Butterfield, of New York.

In July, 1861, the first daily overland mail was established from St. Joseph, Mo., later, Atchison, Kan., to Placerville, Cal. It crossed the "desert" on what was known as the "central route." The length of this route was 1920 miles, *via* Forts Kearney and Bridger and Salt Lake City, and it ran out of Atchison until the summer of 1866. In less than five months after the daily overland mail was established, the fleet pony was followed by the Pacific telegraph. The telegraph line was completed and opened for through business in November, 1861.

The "Butterfield Overland Despatch," an express and fast-freight line, was started across the "desert," on the Smoky Hill route, in 1866, but within eighteen months, on account of financial difficulties, brought on more or less by Indian depredations, the great enterprise was forced to succumb. Then followed a consolidation known as the "Holladay Overland Mail and Express Company," which continued until the iron bands were spiked down, in the spring of 1869—completing the first transcontinental railway line direct from the Missouri river to Sacramento, Cal.

Time has effaced from the maps in use by the present generation the last vestige of what remains of the once so-called "Great American Desert." Little, if any, of this "vast waste" is now to be found. A considerable portion of the "desolate, arid region" has also been reclaimed. Portions of it are steadily being settled, but comparatively a small part only is yet under the plow. Hundreds of thousands of head of cattle are grazing on thousands of hills, and vast numbers of horses, mules, sheep and hogs now subsist and grow fat on the "desert." Where fifty years ago not a town, and only an occasional hamlet was to be found, are to-day the homes of more than three million souls. Across its broad areas are a score or more of important trunk roads, and twice as many branch lines traverse it in every direction. The various railways will aggregate fully 25,000 miles. It boasts no less than 300 cities, each with upward of 1000 inhabitants. It has several thousand villages, and more than 5000 post-offices, a great majority of which are furnished a daily mail. The prairies, and that portion designated as the "plains," are dotted with churches and schoolhouses that would be a credit to the oldest and most populous state in the Union. Many of the farmers, stock-raisers and fruit-growers have put up palatial residences. In less than a half-century a score or more of seminaries and colleges and universities have been built on the "desert." The region is well supplied with mills and manufactories. Fully 2500 newspapers and periodicals have sprung up—750 of them in Kansas alone since the latter was first opened for settlement, in 1854. Some of the finest fruit and stock farms in the great West are embraced in Kansas, in the section once familiarily known as the "unexplored region."

The foregoing are comparatively a small portion of the advantages possessed by this once-thought-to-be-unproductive section. Among its resources are the largest lead and zinc mines in the country—employing thousands of men—which are being daily worked in Kansas, originally set down as the eastern part of the vast "unexplored region." One of the latest Kansas discoveries is petroleum, which promises to yield a supply of oil equal to any section in the Union. The largest quantity and finest quality of salt in the country is produced in Kansas, and the supply is apparently beyond computation. The resources of the state are as numerous as its rich prairies and bottoms are fertile and boundless. A metropolitan Eastern newspaper not long since said: "If you do n't know what you have in Kansas, bore for it."

And this is not all. Kansas possesses inexhaustible quantities of the purest gypsum, a superior quality of building stone, and immense deposits of the finest clay, unequaled for vitrified brick. It has also vast beds of material for making choice mineral paints. At Topeka, the capital city, are millions of tons of the best building sand in the world, car-loads of which are shipped away almost daily, while the unsurpassed soil of the state will grow as much wheat and corn and other cereals as any portion of the wide West.

It is doubtful if another region on the globe has made such rapid strides in the past third of a century as that known a few generations ago as the "Great American Desert." In the last four decades it has been transformed into a veritable garden spot. This vast—almost boundless—expanse of fertile soil, since irrigation has been introduced, now embraces millions of acres of all kinds of grain, fruit, vegetables, and the choicest grasses. The thousands of hills and countless acres of rolling prairie, covered with cattle, horses, sheep, hogs, etc., comprise a region undoubtedly equal to almost any other section of our broad domain.

From the time I was sixteen years old, and just starting out as a "jour. printer" from four years' apprenticeship, I had a strong desire to go out West, as far as the "desert." The great political battle of 1856, I remember, while in my teens, was an exciting one. During the memorable campaign that year, a handbook was freely distributed throughout the country giving a brief history of the life of Col. John C. Fremont, after his nomination for President by the first national Republican convention, which convened that year at Pittsburg. I was greatly interested at that time in reading about the distinguished nominee's explorations in the '40's in search of a route across the continent between the Missouri river and the Pacific ocean. I read the pamphlet with more than ordinary interest. Only a short time before, the Kansas-Nebraska bill had passed Congress, and the public lands in both territories had been thrown open for settlement. The beginning of the intrepid "Pathfinder's" journey of exploration was through the region embracing these two territories, and it extended from the Missouri river to the Pacific slope. At that date, fully a decade before it was thought that such territories or states as now occupy the region would ever be carved out of that part of "Uncle Sam's" possessions, it was known as the "Great American Desert."

I was then a boy of nineteen years and had just come to Kansas. It was a pleasure to me to read the description of the great explorer's journey up the Kansas river to near Topeka and over the gently rolling prairies to the Big Blue; across the plains, up the Platte valley; over the snow-capped Rockies; through the "great basin"; over the Sierras, and beyond to the shores of the Pacific ocean. I little dreamed at that time, however, that it would ever be my lot to make a trip across the plains and "desert" to the Rocky Mountains, much as I had desired to. But changes now and then take place without much warning. In seven years from the time I first saw the little book, and while living in Atchison, and without even a hint on my part, I was surprised by being tendered the position of express messenger on the great "Overland Stage Line." The old four-horse and six-horse Concord coaches were the rapid means of conveyance in the early '60's by the overland route to the Rocky Mountains, to Salt Lake, and to the Pacific coast, notwithstanding it took six days and nights to get to Denver, eleven days to Salt Lake, and seventeen to Placerville; and this was almost continuous riding. The stops were brief.

There is probably no part of the West that has settled up more rapidly and with a more thrifty and better class of people than that part of Kansas and Nebraska through which a third of a century ago was operated what was known as the "Central Overland California Stage Line." A portion of this route passed over the so-called "Great American Desert," much of it being a region of unsurpassed fertility—in fact, one of the best agricultural regions in the country, and, besides, well adapted for stock-raising and the growing of many kinds of fruits. Since the close of the civil war, and the building of railroads across the continent, most of the country has been settled up as if by magic. Choice, well-improved farms are to be seen on all sides; numerous schoolhouses and churches dot the prairies and valleys; mills and shops are found in many localities; while prosperous towns and live, flourishing cities thrive at frequent intervals all over the plains. Hardly one person in a thousand, then traveling on the overland route, would have dreamed of such a change in a single generation. I often wondered, while making my periodical trips across by stage from Atchison to Denver, in 1863–'65, if I would live to see the day when that region would be settled even as far out as Fort Kearney, on the Platte.

At that time Marysville—only 100 miles west of the Missouri river—was almost on the outskirts of civilization in northern Kansas. The next nearest town to it on the east was Seneca, more than thirty miles away. Marysville was the last town of consequence on the overland route between Atchison and the Colorado metropolis. There were several settlements and ranches further west, but ranches were extremely scarce, and only to be found in the groves of timber along the valleys. No one thought at that time of taking up land on high, rolling prairie any great distance away from living water. It seemed that it would be a lifetime before they would ever have neighbors in the Little Blue valley, so far were the ranches apart.

Where the overland stages used to run daily each way, and where thousands of teams annually passed over the road with merchandise, grain, provisions, etc., to supply the forts, towns, mining camps, trading posts and cities in the far West, now run various railroads, and little remains of the old landmarks and scenery with which most of the plainsmen were so familiar thirty-odd years ago.

Late one afternoon in the summer of 1863, I had an exciting experience that I shall not soon forget. At that time I was in the employ of Ben. Holladay, as messenger between Atchison and Denver, on the "Overland Stage Line," which was operated between the Missouri river and the Pacific. It was out in southern Nebraska, a beautiful section of country, far up toward the head waters of the Little Blue river, at a ranch on the rolling prairie called "Oak Grove," about 200 miles northwest of Atchison. The two buildings on the ranch comprised a small, one-story log house and a short distance north of it a plain log stable, both on the north side of the road. The background was a little bluffy and, as its name would indicate, quite a fine growth of oak, for a prairie country. The Little Blue, one of the loveliest streams in Nebraska and Kansas, thinly skirted at intervals with cottonwood and elm, ran easterly from forty to eighty rods distant, to the south of the grove.

For some time previous, trouble had been brewing between the Sioux and Pawnee Indians—in fact, ill feeling had existed for years—and on this occasion a band of Sioux warriors was roving over the country hunting for the newest trail made by the Pawnees. For the first time (in that vicinity) the Indians suddenly stopped the coach at Oak Grove, just as it had come out from Atchison on its west-bound trip. The chief came up in front of the stage and, addressing us, began mumbling over something in the Sioux tongue, not a word of which could I understand, and, accordingly, shook my head. He then began making all manner of signs and gestures, reminding me of deaf and dumb signs, but to me these were equally unintelligible. I sat speechless on the seat alongside the driver. The driver himself (he afterwards admitted to me) felt a little uneasy at first, on account of being so suddenly and unceremoniously stopped in time of peace by a band of Indians. He was fortunate, however, for he had been a long time on the plains—having spent a good deal of time in the Indian country—and could understand enough of the Sioux tongue to know the meaning of quite a number of their words and signs. In answer to the chief's interrogatories and gestures concerning the Pawnees, whom he charged with having run off a number of their ponies, he was informed that they (the Pawnees) had, a short time before, crossed the Little Blue a few miles below Oak Grove, and were then likely pushing their way across the country toward the head waters of the Solomon, one of their favorite localities for hunting the buffalo in the early '60's.

For an hour or two, as we afterward learned, this band of Sioux had been stopping at Oak Grove grazing their ponies, and were, just as the stage rolled up, making preparations to start out on the war-path. Their faces, hands, arms and bodies were painted with odd-looking characters in red, black, and other colors peculiar to the notions of the "noble red men." They were dressed in all sorts of fantastic-appearing costumes, in a promiscuous variety of curious styles. A number of them looked decidedly ludicrous. Some had old silk "plug" hats minus the crown, ornamented with wild turkey, prairie-chicken and buzzard feathers. Some wore rather dilapidated slouch hats, trimmed with German silver ornaments and gaudy, shining buttons. Two or three had jackets on which were well displayed a variety of colored beads. One had a sort of crown with buffalo horns protruding out above the eyes, giving him more the appearance of Satan than an Indian. A number were quite well dressed, while, as could plainly be seen, some were not dressed enough.

Among the costumes noticed, a few had nothing but buckskin leggins and moccasins. No two were dressed exactly alike, except that the most of them were attired in their well-adapted and to them apparently more appropriate and becoming suit—a breech-clout and a red or blue blanket of some kind. Every Indian was painted in aboriginal regulation warlike style, and some looked hideous in the extreme. They had shields and spears, knives and tomahawks, several different kinds of old-style firearms, besides their bows, and quivers well-filled with arrows.

To me it was most exciting, and I must acknowledge the situation looked anything but pleasant and satisfactory. My heart had suddenly jumped up into my throat. No language can describe my feelings as I sat there on the box of that stage-coach at the time. It was plain to any one who had eyes that the Indians were warriors, evidently on the war-path.

For myself, I could n't tell whether they were Pawnees, Sioux, Cheyennes, or Arapahoes. In fact, I did n't have much time to think anything about it. I had seen thousands of Indians before, but these were the first band of the kind I had ever witnessed under similar circumstances, and, while sitting there meditating on the situation, I hoped it might be the last. While the combined forces of Indians numbered perhaps not more than twenty-five or thirty, it seemed to me at the time that the number had become greatly magnified, and I believe I could easily have made oath that there were at least 1000 of them.

The stage was detained by the Indians perhaps not longer than from three to five minutes, but that short time of anxious suspense seemed to me almost a lifetime. Getting what information they could from the driver, they mounted their ponies, and, at the command of the chief, were soon off, with a volley of hideous sounding whoops and yells. That was a happy moment for both the driver and myself.

A HERD OF BUFFALO ON THE PLAINS IN WESTERN KANSAS.

The American bison was found by the first colonists of the Carolinas, and other of the Southern and Middle States, from which parts of the North American continent they have long since been exterminated or frightened away. In the latter part of the eighteenth century they were seen in a wild state in Kentucky. Early in the present century the most of these animals in the region east of the Mississippi were exterminated or had found their way to the prairies west of the great river. History informs us they were found by Coronado on his march northward from Mexico as early as 1585, between the Missouri river and the Rocky Mountains; later they were found by Lewis and Clarke, Zebulon M. Pike, and Long, in the early part of the present century; still later by Fremont and others, who made tours of exploration through the great West. Often they were seen by tourists and hunters in immense herds, numbering hundreds of thousands.

Lieut. John C. Fremont, while exploring the upper country between the Mississippi and Missouri rivers in the later '30's, with M. Nicollet, a scientific Frenchman, had a grand buffalo hunt for the first time near Fort Pierre, a trading fort more than 1250 miles above St. Louis.

In a letter to the New York *Tribune*, written by Horace Greeley, in a Concord stage-coach, while *en route* across the plains for the first time by the "Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express," early in the summer of 1859, the distinguished journalist reported having encountered millions of buffaloes in western Kansas.

The first buffaloes I ever saw were in the streets of Atchison. It was in the early '60's, during the war; but after that I saw them on several occasions. These were domesticated and yoked together, having been driven in by a ranchman from the Republican valley, hauling produce to the Atchison market. They attracted considerable attention from the business men. They seemed to travel all right, were extremely gentle, and, under the yoke, appeared to work quite as nicely as the patient ox. Nothing particularly strange was thought about the matter at the time, when there were immense herds of buffalo roaming wild on the plains of western Kansas; but I never, after that year, saw any of the shaggy animals yoked and doing the work of oxen.

The number of buffalo in the great West less than half a century ago was roughly estimated at from ten to twenty millions.

Careful authorities put the number at fifteen millions. They once existed in New York, a number of buffaloes having been killed in the western part of that state, near where the bustling commercial city of Buffalo is built, which will perpetuate the name of the now practically extinct American animal. In western Pennsylvania, near the salt-licks, a number of buffaloes were found; and, according to an early explorer, a few head were found in the District of Columbia and large numbers in Virginia. According to early writers, they were found in the Carolinas and along the northeast coast of Georgia, the only record known of their existence on the Atlantic seaboard. East of the Mississippi, they ranged south as far as northern Alabama and were found in places throughout Mississippi and Louisiana. Large numbers abounded in Texas. They were also found in the northern provinces of Mexico, New Mexico, a portion of Utah, and also in Idaho, Washington, and in the arctic circle as far north as Great Slave Lake. The natural home of the buffalo, however, was on the plains between the Missouri river and the Rocky Mountains, their northern and southern limits extending from Great Slave Lake to the Rio Grande. Outside of the limits of their real home the few small herds that existed were stragglers. Daniel Boone, the famous Kentucky hunter, once found a herd of buffaloes in his state which numbered about 1000 head. That was then believed to be a big herd, but it was not then known that there were herds numbering millions of buffalo grazing on the plains embraced in the region known as the "Great American Desert," lying between the Missouri and the Rockies.

The pioneers of Kansas, particularly a number who settled on the frontier—along the upper valleys of the Smoky Hill, Republican, Solomon and Saline rivers—practically owed their lives to the existence of the buffalo. For years in the '60's a goodly portion of the meat consumed by those early settlers was cut from the carcass of the noble, shaggy animal which so long existed as monarch of the plains. Thousands of people who at an early day went overland to Utah, Oregon and California drew their supply of meat from the buffalo. Where this life-preserver was found, it was known that, by following their paths, near by water would be found. The principal article of fuel found on the frontier for cooking the meat of the buffalo was the dried excrement of the animal, known in early Kansas and Nebraska parlance as "buffalochips." The buffalo was one of the noblest of all animals. It seemed indispensable. It furnished man with an abundance of the most wholesome meat; the hide was made into shoes and garments worn during the day, and it made a comfortable bed and supplied warm covering in or out of doors at night.

The building of the Pacific railroad was made possible at so early a day simply because the buffalo existed. From the mighty herds the vast army of railroad builders drew their daily supply of fresh meat, and thousands of the animals were annually slaughtered for food while pushing to completion, in the '60's, the great transcontinental line. For a few years in the '70's the railways did an enormous business carrying East train loads of hides and buffalo bones, these for a number of years being the principal articles of commerce gathered from the plains. For years the great West resembled a vast charnel-house. Losing their crops, the pioneer settlers gathered up the bleached bones that covered the land, and they were shipped to the carbon works in the East, from the sale of which enough was realized to enable them to pull through another season.

In the natural-history building of the Kansas University can be seen the finest group of mounted buffalo in the world. They are in Prof. L. L. Dyche's collection of North American mammals. The specimens are remnants from both the great northern and southern herds, and are exceptionally fine. While this group is probably the finest ever seen, Professor Dyche sooner or later will have nine more choice skins mounted, taken from buffalo that were natives of southwestern Kansas.

Kansas was the natural home of the buffalo. "Old Tecumseh," a buffalo bull that for several years had a home in Bismarck grove, at Lawrence, is now said to be in Yellowstone park, in a domesticated herd on an island in Yellowstone lake, the herd being viewed and greatly admired by thousands of visitors annually. Doubtless the largest specimen ever secured for museum work is in the National Museum, at Washington. It was secured by W. T. Hornaday, author of a valuable work upon the "Extermination of the American Bison." While there are some good live specimens to be found in a few city parks throughout the country, it is alleged by Mr. Hornaday that they can in no way be compared with the buffalo in his wild and native state.

The buffalo, in color, is brown, but the shade varies as the seasons advance. It was in every respect a peculiar animal, unlike any other. It was impossible, before its extermination, to turn a herd from its course. After a few years of cruel, relentless war upon the shaggy animals, the few that remained became extremely wild. A characteristic of the animal is that it never trots, but walks or gallops, and it usually travels against the wind. Its sense of smell is so keen that it can scent a foe two miles distant to the windward.

The last herd of buffalo I ever saw in the wild, native state was in the fall of 1870. It was along the Kansas Pacific railroad, near the head waters of the Smoky Hill river. The railroad had just been built, and the animals seemed terribly frightened at the cars. In their mad race westward along the railroad, they actually kept up with the passenger-train, which was moving along from fifteen to eighteen miles an hour. The race became exciting, and all the passengers — many of whom had never before seen a buffalo — held their breath in suspense. It was noticed that the animals never changed their course, but kept steadily coming nearer the train, apparently determined to cross the track at a curve a short distance beyond. Not caring for a collision which might possibly derail the train, the engineer gave up the race and whistled "down brakes," stopping within a few rods of the animals to let them cross. A parting salute was given by some of the passengers, who emptied the chambers of their six-shooters among the beasts, but which they did not appear to mind any more than a blast from a toy pop-gun. While these animals used to cover the prairies and plains of western Kansas and Nebraska in countless millions, hardly one of them is now left to remind us of the once noble and powerful herds originally known in the great West as "crooked-back oxen."

The best meat we used to get on the frontier in the early days was buffalo. The markets at Atchison, Leavenworth, Topeka and a number of other Kansas towns, as early as 1857 and for some years following, were often supplied with buffalo meat, brought in from central Kansas. No beef, it was said, could excel, even if it could equal, that of the buffalo; especially the hump upon the shoulders, which was invariably spoken of as a "choice morsel." Rich, juicy buffalo steaks and superb roasts were as common in the '60's on the plains as were other fresh meats in the best of well-regulated city markets.

The tongues, when boiled, were exceedingly rich and tender, and were eagerly sought after—almost invariably bringing good prices. Most of those who had once tasted of buffalo tongue thought nothing could equal it. Thousands of the tongues were dried and shipped east to the New York and Boston markets, where they were in great demand, and brought big prices.

Under the head of "Buffalo Oxen," the following interesting account of the American bison is taken from the *American Farmer* (vol. VI, p. 260):

"The animal known by the name of the buffalo throughout the valleys of the Missouri and Mississippi differs materially from the buffalo of the old world. At first view, his red, fiery eyes, his shaggy mane and long beard, the long, lustrous hair upon his shoulders and fore quarters, and the comparative nakedness of his hind quarters, strongly remind a spectator of the lion.

"In the size of his head, in bulk, in stature, and in fierceness, he resembles the buffalo of Buffon; but the hump or protuberance between his shoulders, the shape of his head, his curled forehead, short, thick arms and long hind legs mark a much stronger affinity to the bison.

"He carries his head low, like the buffalo, and this circumstance, together with his short, muscular neck, broad chest, and short, thick arms, designate him as peculiarly qualified for drawing; the whole weight of his body would thus be applied in the most advantageous manner to the weight drawn.

"The milk of the female is equal in quality to that of the cow, but deficient in quantity. It has been supposed that the smallness of the udders is more remarkable in those that have the hump large, and that the diminished size of the hump is evidence of a more abundant secretion of milk. The hump, when dressed, tastes like the udder of the cow, and is deemed a delicacy by the Indians. But there is one other particular which distinguishes the buffalo of the new world from its Eastern namesake more distinctly than any variety of confirmation could do. The cow refuses to breed with the buffalo of Europe; and such is the fixed aversion between these creatures that they always keep separate, although bred under the same roof and feeding in the same pasture. The American buffalo, on the contrary, breeds freely with the domestic cattle, and propagates a race that continues its kind."

What a shame, what an outrage on civilization! that the buffalo—that once noble race grazing between the Missouri and the Rockies—was so ruthlessly slaughtered. Millions of the shaggy beasts were indiscriminately shot down by the white man in the '60's and '70's, apparently just for the "fun of the thing."

I remember well in the early '60's, while residing at Atchison, when long ox trains, loaded exclusively with buffalo hides, frequently were brought in from the plains by freighters. The wagons were unloaded on the levee and the skins shipped on board steamboats down the Missouri river for St. Louis and Cincinnati. Later, I saw hundreds of wagon-loads of these skins on the plains, in 1863–'65, when riding on the overland stage along the Platte and Little Blue rivers. Several years afterward such trains were frequent sights at various towns on the Missouri. Most of the wagon trains bearing the cargoes of untanned robes from the "Great American Desert" were from the Platte valley; some bound for Omaha, some for Nebraska City, some for St. Joseph, and most of the balance for Atchison and Leavenworth. Hundreds of wagon-loads of the skins from the plains went into Kansas City from the "Old Santa Fé Trail."

In St. Louis was a large company of fur dealers, with a branch house in St. Joseph, which bought, in 1871, about 250,000 of these skins. Besides, there were many other companies on the Missouri river dealing in buffalo hides. At some of the railroad stations were large sheds packed with dried buffalo skins, and later this was a common sight at a number of towns in Texas, Kansas, Nebraska, and as far north as the Dakotas, in the '70's. There are parties who well remember seeing, at Cheyenne, Wyo., a shed on the Union Pacific road 175 feet long, 60 feet wide, and 30 feet high, so crowded with buffalo hides that it would seem almost impossible to squeeze in another. In 1872–'74, there were auction sales of buffalo hides at Fort Worth, Texas, lasting a day or two, and as many as 200,000 skins were disposed of.

According to a writer in *Harper's Magazine* a few years ago, Fort Benton—a military post about 2500 miles up the Missouri from St. Louis—in 1876, alone sent 80,000 buffalo hides to market. Toward the close of their career on the plains the animals had divided into two great herds—the southern and northern. The great southern herd, however, was the first to go, being practically extinct at the close of 1872. A few straggling herds only, after that date, were to be found. The early '80's was about the last seen of the wild buffalo of the plains, which a quarter of a century or more before was so numerous between the Missouri river and the Rocky Mountains. The greatest slaughter of the beasts was in 1872-'74, when, it was estimated, the number slain ran up into the millions.

Hundreds of the best shots from all over this country and Europe, in the early '70's, were on hand to take a farewell hunt before the shaggy bison became extinct. Scores of noted Nimrods came from England, Scotland, Russia, and Germany—in fact, from almost every part of Europe. The Grand Duke Alexis, youngest son of Emperor Alexander, of Russia, with quite a numerous retinue, came with a party from St. Petersburg, and went on a tour through "Buffalo Land" in the winter of 1871-'72. While on their royal hunt the party numbered seventeen persons. After the grand buffalo chase on the plains of western Kansas, in charge of "Buffalo Bill" and Generals Sheridan and Custer, the royal party moved on westward to take a view of the glorious old Rocky Mountains. They spent several days in and around Denver and received a magnificent ovation. The day following their arrival in the "Queen City of the Plains" they were driven about the place in carriages, the festivities winding up in the evening with a grand ducal ball at the American House.

The Indians themselves, up to the later '60's, had killed thousands of the animals merely for the hides and tongues, for which there had already become a good market. As time passed, there was an increased demand for these articles at the numerous ranches and trading posts along the Platte. Previous to that time, for a number of generations, however, the buffaloes were slaughtered by the Indians only for the meat and skins they themselves were in need of, and such slaughter did not diminish the numbers in the herds.

A year or two before the stage-coach was forced from the overland route by the Pacific railroad, it was estimated that the number of buffaloes roaming the plains between the Missouri river and the Rocky Mountains aggregated at least nine and a half millions. At the same time there were over 150,000 Arapahoes, Cheyennes, Kiowas, Pawnees and Sioux living in the buffalo region, largely dependent upon these animals for their supply of meat.

For four years—1865 to 1869—during the lively era of constructing the Pacific railroad and its branches, no less than 250,000 buffaloes were slaughtered in Kansas and other Western States. From 1869 to 1876 the greatest slaughter took place, and the number in those years slain ran up into the millions. The animals had become quite scarce in the later '70's and early '80's, yet no less than one and a half million buffalo were killed. The year 1870 was a great year in hunting the buffalo, during which time upwards of two million were killed in Kansas, Indian Territory, and Texas.

The most conspicuous person engaged in the great slaughter was the intrepid scout and Indian fighter, Col. William F. Cody, who has been more familiarly known as "Buffalo Bill." In 1867, when the Kansas Pacific railroad was being built across the plains to Denver, Cody, then a young man, made a contract with the railway officials to keep its army of workmen supplied with buffalo meat. For doing this he received $500 per month. He was engaged in this work eighteen months, during which time he killed an average of about eight a day—in all 4280 buffaloes; and this is how Cody became the renowned "Buffalo Bill."

It was seldom that any one on the stage, as late as 1863 or 1864, got a shot at a buffalo, though there were thousands of them along the route, often in plain sight, only a mile or two back from the Platte. So enormous was the overland traffic in the '60's that the buffalo became shy, and kept too far away from the road to give sportsmen any opportunity for fun in that direction. To get them then required a special trip and proper equipments.

The last buffalo east of the Mississippi river was killed in 1832. For the first third of the present century, according to a number of explorers, those crossing the plains were never out of sight of the buffalo, immense herds of them being visible all the way between the Missouri and the Rockies.

The wild buffalo were all gone many years ago, but, in their place are not less than one hundred million head of cattle, sheep, and hogs; and, while the Indians with their wigwams have nearly all disappeared from the plains, ten times the number of white men and women—most of them in comfortable homes, living in cities, towns, and villages—now occupy their places.

Nearly all the trading posts along the Platte were called "ranches," and there were more than a dozen of them in a distance of 200 miles, between Fort Kearney and old Julesburg, and about half as many on the remaining 200 miles between Julesburg and Denver. Many of those engaged in the business were among the shrewdest traders to be found in the West. From their prices for any articles they kept in stock, it was plainly evident that they were not in the business merely "for their health." Where they were firmly established, at commanding locations—convenient to grazing and good water, with choice places for camping—they made piles of money bartering with the half-dozen or more tribes of Indians that could be seen occasionally at intervals along the Platte.

For a pound or two of a cheap grade of brown sugar, or an equivalent of some low grade of coffee, they could buy from one of the redskins a buffalo robe then considered to be worth from five to ten dollars at the Missouri river towns. For double the amount of those staples they could get one of the very finest cow robes. Some of these were painted in fine aboriginal style, with many of the hieroglyphics peculiar to the superstitious red man of the plains, and were greatly admired by purchasers who lived in the East and bought them for souvenirs of the frontier.

Thousands of the finest robes that could be picked up were bought and highly prized as souvenirs of the "Great American Desert" by parties going East and West in the '60's. Such robes would fetch at this day at least fifty, perhaps seventy-five or one hundred dollars each. An ordinary robe, originally costing not to exceed fifty to seventy-five cents in goods, was retailed by the traders to stage passengers, tourists and freighters along the Platte for from three to six dollars—the very finest selling for seven dollars and fifty cents.

As early as 1863, the trade in buffalo robes with the Indians on the Platte had increased until it was simply enormous. Hundreds of thousands of the animals were annually killed, and I have many times seen long trains returning from the mountains loaded almost exclusively with robes, hauled by oxen, horses and mules along the overland route eastward to the Missouri river—to Omaha, Nebraska City, St. Joseph, Atchison, and Leavenworth; thence shipped by steamboat, consigned to leading firms engaged in the trade at St. Louis.

Every person in any way connected with the overland freighting business in the '60's had one or more buffalo robes. In fact, on the "Overland" such robes were indispensable. Scores of persons traveling the plains were provided with an overcoat made from the skin of these bisons. Every freighter and ox and mule driver also had buffalo overshoes, made with the hair inside. After a lapse of thirty years and more, it is almost impossible to find a first-class buffalo robe anywhere in the country, and what few can at this date be picked up readily command big prices.

During the immense overland traffic in the early '60's, portions of the plains were fairly white with bones of the buffalo. The animals had first been killed by the Indians for their food and robes, and, later, millions of the shaggy beasts had been indiscriminately slaughtered by the white man just for sport, their carcasses left a prey for the wolves, and their bones to bleach by the wayside. In the '50's and '60's their bones were scattered promiscuously in certain localities for hundreds of miles in central and western Kansas, and between Fort Kearney and Julesburg along the Platte, as far back from the river as the eye could reach.

No one seeing the apparently endless mass of bones even dreamed that any use would ever be made of them; but, after the completion of the Union Pacific railway and its branches across the "Great American Desert," and, later, the building of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fé line into the Southwest, an immense new industry was early inaugurated in Kansas. Kansas was the natural home of the buffalo, and, during the '70's, hundreds of merchants in the western part of the state had a regular trade established and did a lively business buying and shipping buffalo bones to Eastern markets.

For about a quarter of a century the business has been an extinct industry. The immense trade carried on in it at the time aggregated astonishing figures. It is estimated that in ten years the trade in these bones alone amounted to fully two and a half million dollars. With the bones in market, the price averaged about eight dollars per ton. Of those shipped from Kansas, it is believed they represented the carcasses of no less than thirty million buffalo. Millions of the animals were annually killed in the later '60's and '70's, when the work of building railroads was actively going on in the state. It is no exaggeration to say that the animals slaughtered would have loaded hundreds of thousands of cars and packed them to their fullest capacity. The Topeka *Mail and Breeze*, speaking of the extinct industry, says that, "allowing forty feet for a car—which is crowding 'em—it would make a string of cars 7575 miles long—enough to more than fill two tracks from New York to San Francisco."

Statistics show that, in 1874 alone, there was shipped east over the Kansas Pacific and Santa Fé roads, over ten million pounds of these bones, over one and a quarter million pounds of buffalo hides, and over six hundred thousand pounds of buffalo meat, the bulk of all the shipments being from the state of Kansas, where the animals roamed at will over the prairies and plains before the advent of the iron horse. The bones gathered up and shipped east were used for fertilizing purposes, while thousands of the horns were polished, and made beautiful ornaments for the sitting-room and office.

The most unique and valuable of office ornaments were the mounted buffalo heads, which were quite common after the completion of the Union Pacific railway. In the ticket office of almost every prominent Union Pacific depot, and in many of the metropolitan hotels all over the country were elaborate and beautifully painted signs of the great overland pioneer road, beside which would almost invariably be seen one of the elegantly mounted souvenir buffalo heads, probably at the time the most appropriate design for advertising the great road that could possibly be devised. A few only of the mounted heads are still to be found in colleges and universities, but they are becoming scarce and very valuable, for they represent a once mighty, powerful, but now almost extinct race.

In Flathead lake, Montana, is Wildhorse island, on which is being perpetuated a herd of forty buffalo, which one of the enterprising Flathead aborigines has saved from ruthless slaughter by the white man. Flathead lake is said to be the seventh largest lake in the United States; in area, ten to twenty miles in width and thirty miles long. On the mainland, not far from the lake, it is learned from Albert R. Greene, of Lecompton, Kan., there is a herd of 300 of the shaggy animals, belonging to the same owner. This is doubtless the largest number of wild American buffalo to be found on the globe. Some idea of the value of the two herds may be had when it is learned that a choice buffalo robe is valued at about $75; and, when made into a stylish, artistic overcoat, will readily fetch from $150 to $200. This Flathead is evidently a level-headed Indian.

FIRST DAILY OVERLAND MAIL COACH ON WAY ACROSS THE PLAINS.

CHAPTER III.

FIRST DAILY OVERLAND MAIL.

WHEN hostilities broke out between the North and the South, early in 1861, after the first Republican President had been elected, it became imperative that the Government make a change in the location of the great overland mail route. It was decided to locate it entirely north of the Confederacy's dominions; and also that the new schedule for transporting the mail be increased to six times a week to and from California, instead of semiweekly.

While the southern, or, as it was then better known, the Butterfield line, was in full and successful operation, making regular trips twice a week, there was also a monthly mail line in operation from the Missouri river to Salt Lake City on the central route, several hundred miles farther north. The Mormons, during their early years in Utah, were fortunate in having a great mail route centering in their territory from both east and west. They were more than a thousand miles from the Missouri river. The nearest point to them having railroad communication with the East was St. Joseph, the Hannibal & St. Joseph railroad having been completed and opened for traffic in February, 1859. A little more than a year later Atchison had rail connection with the East *via* St. Joseph.

Concerning the subject of overland postal affairs in the '50's, as has already been noted, there was a monthly mail route in operation between Independence and Salt Lake City. After the railroad was opened from Hannibal to the Missouri river, St. Joseph was made the starting-point for the "Great Salt Lake Mail." It was carried by a four-mule stage line for a short time; but when the railroad was extended down the east bank of the Missouri from St. Joseph, twenty miles beyond, to Atchison (on the west bank of the great bend of the river), a change was made. Atchison secured the prize, and the mail was afterwards carried from there across the plains once a week, *via* Forts Kearney, Laramie, and Bridger. The schedule time from the Missouri river through to the Mormon capital was reduced from thirty to eighteen days. The distance, as the road was laid out and traveled, was between 1200 and 1300 miles.

It took a month in the early '50's to get the mail to Utah from Independence and St. Joseph, Mo., and later from Atchison, Kan.; likewise, a month was consumed in making the trip east from Sacramento, to Salt Lake, little more than half the distance. The line from the Missouri river to the "City of the Saints," for a time in the early '60's, was in charge of Mr. S. B. Miles, a Western frontiersman and pioneer mail contractor on the frontier.

The first monthly mail route to Salt Lake, established July 1, 1850, was a great help to the pioneers of Utah, but it seemed a slow way of getting the news. Complaints were made that the postal route was poorly conducted. As an example, the news from Washington of the creation of the Territory of Utah, in September, 1850, did not reach the Mormon city until January, 1851, and came *via* California by private messenger.

W. G. Chorpening, in the '50's, was proprietor of the mail line from Sacramento east to the Utah capital, there connecting with the route from St. Joseph, Mo. In the spring of 1858, Chorpening purchased ten stage-coaches, with all the necessary supplies for the route, and the vehicles were received at Atchison in August, 1858, by Missouri river steamboat. The vehicles were at once put in condition and started on their long journey across the plains, drawn by mules, in charge of experienced drivers and plainsmen.

These two routes, in charge of different parties—one extending from the Missouri river to Salt Lake, and the other from the California capital to the Mormon metropolis—were practically operated as one line. It was over a portion of these two routes that Horace Greeley made his overland journey by stage to the Pacific, in the summer of 1859, when he was for ten days and for about a third of the distance on the trip accompanied by Albert D. Richardson, the noted Eastern newspaper correspondent and author.

The distance traveled together by these two journalists was something near 600 miles, and by the Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express. The territory traversed was from the Missouri valley to the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains—much of the same route as now traversed by the Kansas branch of the Union Pacific railway, and which covers the distance (640 miles) inside of eighteen hours. The railroad fare has been reduced from forty-five to fifteen dollars.

On the 12th of March, 1861, service on the southern overland mail route was ordered discontinued, and one month's extra pay ($50,000) was allowed the contractors. The order to discontinue was preparatory to changing the location of route, the post-office department having ostensibly decided on a shorter line; but the real purpose was to get away from the scene of hostilities between the North and the South.

The central route was regarded as a highly important frontier mail line, as at first operated about half a century ago. It supplied the Mormons with their mail, as also the various military and trading posts *en route*. There was a post-office at each fort, and the traders and frontiersmen residing or sojourning in that part of the then sparsely settled country received their mail from the east and the west.

The semiweekly overland mail route—the original one from St. Louis—was abandoned in the spring of 1861, and St. Joseph, the great distributing office on the Missouri river, was selected as the initial point for the departure of the first daily overland mail. In less than three months, however, Atchison, being the farthest city in the West reached by railroad and telegraph on the Missouri river and east of the Sierra Nevadas, the mail was carried there by rail from St. Joseph, and it afterwards became the starting-point for the consolidated stage line carrying the great mail, and known as the "Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express," abbreviated to C. O. C. & P. P.

The company operating this important stage line across the continent had it equipped with the latest modern four- and six-horse (and mule) Concord coaches, which ran daily from Atchison *via* Salt Lake City to Placerville, Cal. To make the schedule, an average of a fraction less than 112 miles must be covered each and every day in transit.

With the exception of a few weeks of Indian troubles at different times in 1862, 1864, and 1865, the "Overland" was in operation and running stages daily out of Atchison for about five years. In equipment, no similar line could excel it. In importance, none could equal it. It was the greatest stage line on the globe carrying the mail, passengers, and express. It was also deemed the safest, and was known to be by far the quickest and most expeditious way to get across the plains and over the mighty mountain ranges that intervened. Meals at the eating stations along the route during the period of overland mail traffic cost from fifty cents to two dollars each, according to distance out from Atchison.

In 1864 and 1865 it cost more for meals alone, on the stage line between Atchison and Denver, than the entire cost for railroad fare and meals now by the Kansas branch of the Union Pacific. At this time, after a lapse of more than thirty-five years, it requires less than eighteen hours to make the run from the Missouri river to Denver by rail, and the fare is only $15, against $175, when the highest point had been reached, by stage, in the fall of 1864.

The stock, coaches, etc., on the southern route were pulled off, and accordingly moved north, and, by act of Congress, on July 1, 1861, the route between St. Joseph and Placerville, having been duly equipped for a daily line, went into operation. It took about three months to make the transfer of stages and stock, and to build a number of new stations, secure hay and grain, and get everything in readiness for operating a six-times-a-week mail line. The new line was designated by the post-office department as the "Central Overland California Route."

Before making the final selection of the railroad route for carrying the overland mail between the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, there was a trial of speed among the several frontier railway lines to ascertain which road could make the quickest time in transporting this highly important mail. The Hannibal & St. Joseph road was already built across Missouri, and had been in operation between the "Father of Waters" and the "Big Muddy" for over two years. The "Northwestern" was rapidly pushing across Iowa, with Omaha as its objective point; and the Missouri Pacific was steadily winding its way up the Missouri river westward from St. Louis to Kansas City.

These three important Western roads were anxiously hoping to obtain a prize in the form of a contract for carrying the great overland letter mail, which originally went by the Isthmus on a Pacific steamer. The time for making a test of speed was close at hand. A man by the name of Ad. Clark was then one of the favorite engineers on the Hannibal & St. Joseph railroad. He was selected by the railroad officials to make the run over his line, and he made it—covering the distance, 206 miles—in four hours and fifty minutes, beating all previous records, and the contract was accordingly given to that road.

The first through daily stages on the central route left St. Joseph and Placerville simultaneously on July 1, 1861. Both coaches reached their destination on the 18th, the time occupied in making the trip being a few hours over seventeen days, whereas, the schedule was twenty-five days by the southern route. Notwithstanding the initial trip was attended with a number of perplexing and what at first seemed almost insurmountable difficulties, the announcement of the safe arrival of the first overland daily mail in six days less time than over the original Butterfield route proved that the gigantic enterprise—pronounced an impossibility by the preceding national administration—was a complete success.

Soon after the completion of the Hannibal & St. Joseph railroad, St. Joseph became an important shipping point. When the Government decided to make it the starting-point for the daily overland mail, long wagon trains were at once put on the great thoroughfare, and transported supplies across the plains to the various stage stations on the frontier. It required a train of twenty-five or thirty wagons to haul the provisions, forage and necessary supplies for each division of the line, as it took a large quantity of these to feed the vast army of employees, many hundred head of stock, with blacksmiths, harness-makers, carpenters, and wagon-makers. It was necessary to have at each station extra teams for use in case of loss from raids or other losses incident to the perils of more than a thousand miles of wilderness.

The first through passenger on a Concord stage-coach from California to St. Joseph by the central route was Maj. J. W. Simonton, one of the editors of the San Francisco *Bulletin*. He came on the first coach. As Gen. Bela M. Hughes aptly said at the time, it "solved the problem of overland transportation," and was "the avant-courier of the great railroad line."

At each end of the line the event was celebrated with much pomp, it being regarded as an undertaking of vast importance, not only to the east and west ends, but also an enterprise of considerable magnitude to the entire country.

St. Joseph, having more than a year before fortunately become the "Pony Express" starting-point, was brought into additional prominence. But it did not, however, long enjoy the honor of being the point of departure for the country's greatest stage line. In September following a change was ordered. Atchison, on account of its favorable location—being fourteen miles farther west than St. Joseph or any other point on the Missouri river reached by rail—was, by an order from the post-office department, made the starting-point for the overland mail. Being the distributing office for the great Western mails, the sacks for Denver, Salt Lake City, Carson, Virginia City, Sacramento and San Francisco were made up at St. Joseph, tagged, and put upon the cars for Winthrop, where they were taken out, loaded upon the omnibus, transferred across the Missouri to Atchison, thence taken to the post-office, and there loaded onto the stages with the Atchison mail bound for the Pacific coast and intermediate points.

A four-horse Concord stage-coach left Atchison at eight o'clock in the morning seven times a week, taking out a mail every day except Monday, that day's coach in charge of a messenger being loaded with express packages—the most of them for Denver and other Colorado points—and transported at the rate of one dollar per pound.

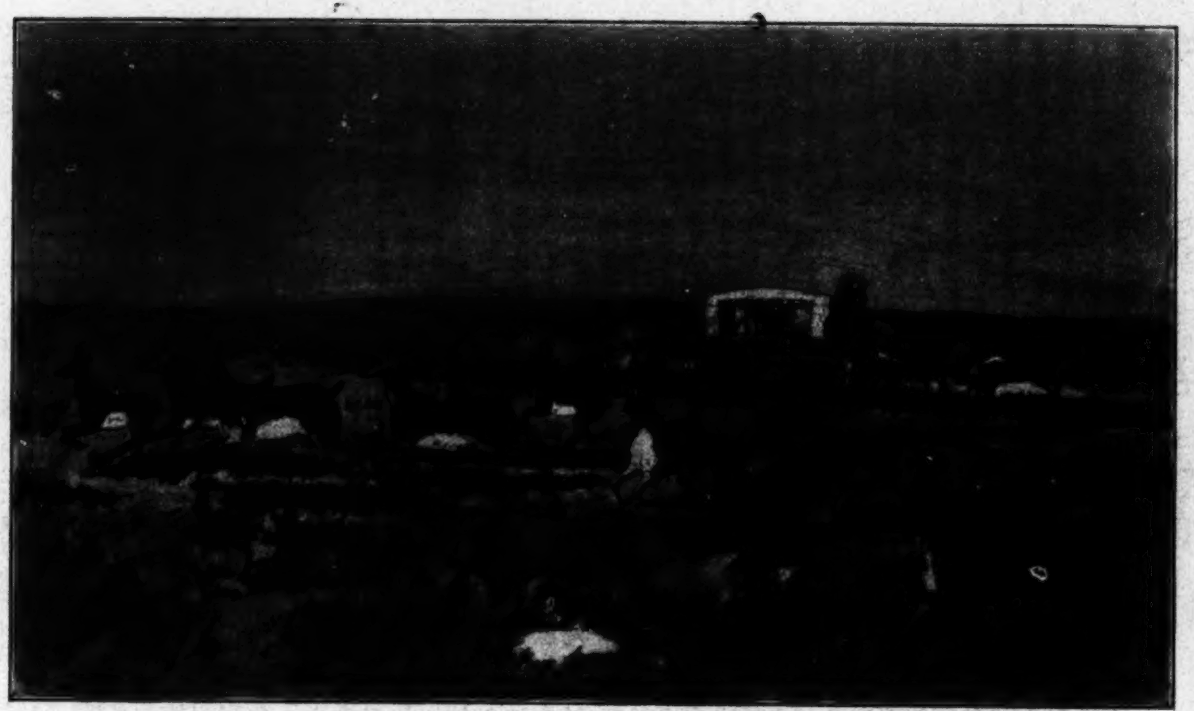
When Atchison was made the starting-point it was uncertain how long the mail would continue to go from there. The civil war was raging, and the forces of the Confederacy had been doing much damage to both the Hannibal & St. Joseph and the North Missouri railroads. They had in some places torn up the track, burned a number of bridges, destroyed culverts, fired promiscuously into trains, placed obstructions along the road-bed, and otherwise committed various depredations, frequently delaying the mail from two to six days while coming through Missouri. As a result the situation at once began to look critical. It was feared at Atchison—and the talk was getting to be quite common—that the overland mail, in consequence of the work of the bushwhackers who were making raids in all directions through Missouri, would change to some point north. To insure its safe transit, it was said it would have to go across Iowa to Council Bluffs, thence west from Omaha. In fact, while the railway troubles were looking decidedly serious, the great mail was sent a few trips from Davenport through Iowa to Omaha. In consequence, Atchison, for a short time, was fairly "trembling in her boots," fearing this would be the ultimate result. But the "powers that be," at Washington, early saw the necessity of keeping these two important Missouri railroads open for traffic. It was the most direct—practically the only feasible—route to Kansas, Nebraska, and Colorado. The Government saw that the way must be kept open at all hazards, and at once made provision for the emergency. A sufficient number of troops were placed at convenient distances along the entire line of each railroad to insure not only the Kansas and Colorado, but also the Salt Lake and Pacific coast mails, coming through safely and, as near as possible, on schedule time.

This last order having been promulgated at the national capital and carried into effect, Atchison rested comparatively easy. From that time forward the place continued to be the point of departure for the overland mail until the Concord stage-coach was forced to retire by the completion of the Union Pacific railway, which was built through from Omaha to Fort Kearney in 1866, thence on west, almost in sight of the old military and overland stage road, on the north side of the Platte, while the stage road was on the south side. For 200 miles—from Fort Kearney to a point opposite old Julesburg—the early stage road and railroad were in no place more than a few miles apart; in a number of places a short distance on either side of the river and only the river itself separating them.

In the summer of 1866, after the overland stages had been taken off the route between Atchison and Fort Kearney, the mail west ran from Omaha to Denver daily on the Platte route, stopping at all the stations between the Missouri river and the Colorado capital. At the same time a through, three-times-a-week mail line was established and operated through Kansas over the Smoky Hill route, going west by rail to the end of track on the Kansas Pacific, thence by stage to its destination.

The first mail route along the Smoky Hill fork by stage-coach was shortly thereafter increased to a daily. It soon became, as new towns and settlements sprang up, a great mail route, and was continued for about four years, or until the completion of the Kansas branch of the Union Pacific road to Denver, in 1870.

The plains, as crossed in the days of the overland mail, were by some considered the most monotonous part of the journey from the Missouri river to Salt Lake. Between three and four



THE OVERLAND MAIL ON THE PLAINS OF KANSAS.

decades ago they were mentioned by Agassiz, who at the time declared that they were the grandest of all glacial deposits—a scope of country 500 miles wide and 1000 long—stretching from river to mountain and from the British line to Mexico. Truthfully did Agassiz picture them as a magnificent "earth-ocean, rolling up in beautiful green billows along the shore of the continental streams and mountains that border it, and calming down in the center, as if the divine voice had spoken again, as of yore, 'Peace, be still.'" Well do many yet living remember, in their boyhood days, reading in the books and upon the maps of this vast region, which was known only as the "Great American Desert," "Unexplored Regions," etc. But much of this has been explored, and is no longer a desert. That part of "Uncle Sam's" domain, even as late as the '50's and '60's, was known as a region inhabited almost exclusively by the Indian and buffalo. It has since been changed into an immense pasture ground, on which are grazing, annually, hundreds of thousands of cattle, horses, and sheep, while vast numbers of hogs are annually sent to market, and countless millions of bushels of corn, wheat, rye, oats, barley, and the finest vegetables, in addition to vast quantities of choice fruit, are annually produced.

During the pioneer days of overland mail and staging, in the later '50's and early '60's, from Atchison direct to Denver and Salt Lake, and beyond to the Pacific, before there was a change in proprietorship, the line was known as the "Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express." The change was made under a mortgage foreclosure. Ben. Holladay, of New York, who advanced vast sums of money to the former company, took possession of the mail route late in 1861. There was a reorganization early in 1862 and the new "stage king" gave it the name of the "Overland Stage Line."

After the C. O. C. & P. P. Express line passed into the control of Ben. Holladay, the new overland stage king, gold was discovered in Idaho and Montana. Holladay a short time thereafter obtained an increased subsidy from the Government, and added additional lines—one to Virginia City, Mont., one to Boise City, Idaho—until the mileage of his stage lines amounted to 3300 miles. It is said the discovery of gold in the Northwest was the saving of Holladay from financial ruin, in the early '60's. He ran the stage lines at an enormous expense. The Indians and road-agents were factors which made the cost of operating the line about double. The half-breed French and "squaw men" (as whites who lived with the Indians were called) were almost the only settlers on the route, except at Government forts, and were frequently warring on the company by raids on its stock and supplies, and pilfering, to trade with the wild Indians.

Holladay was now at the head of the great enterprise and continued to operate it until after the close of the civil war—all together about five years—finally selling out to Wells, Fargo & Co., who operated it until the iron bands were stretched across the continent. The latter firm, with a national reputation and backed with vast wealth, bought nearly fifty new Concord coaches, and operated a large number of important new stage lines that were necessarily opened to all the rich mining camps in the Northwest after the completion of the Pacific road.

In the latter years, while Holladay ran the great stage line, he obtained possession of the "Butterfield Overland Despatch." This was an important rival line organized by D. A. Butterfield, and operated through Kansas, more than 100 miles south of the Platte, on the Smoky Hill route. In 1867 these two lines were consolidated, and the name accordingly changed to the "Holladay Overland Mail and Express Company."

The great transcontinental railway was being built from both ends, and, as fast as 50 to 100 miles of track were completed west of Fort Kearney and east of Sacramento, in the '60's, the stages and stock were moved forward to the new starting station. There it took the mails, express packages and passengers from the terminus of the railroad at the ends of the lines on both the Union and Central Pacific.

The Union Pacific was the first railroad built across the plains and over the Rocky Mountains west from the Missouri river; the Central Pacific the first one built from Sacramento across the Sierra Nevadas eastward. A junction was formed at Promontory, but later this was changed to Ogden, Utah.

Almost immediately after taking possession of the overland mail route, Holladay began preparations to make it not only the leading and model stage line in America, but the most important one on the globe. His long and successful career on the frontier was of great advantage to him. He had crossed the plains many times with oxen and mules long before the first stage line was dreamed of, and had "roughed it" on the frontier in pioneer days. He had been all over the great West and Northwest and enjoyed a wide acquaintance in the territories and on the Pacific slope. He employed the most skilful and experienced stage men in the country; he bought, regardless of price, the finest horses and mules suitable for staging that money could secure; he purchased dozens of first-class Concord coaches; he built additional stations and storehouses at convenient distances on the plains and in the mountains for storing hay and grain, and added many extra features to make the long, tedious overland trip of nearly 2000 miles by stage an easier and more pleasant one.

The stage-coaches used on the overland line were built by the Abbot-Downing Company, in Concord, N. H. They carried nine passengers inside and one or two could ride on the box alongside the driver. Some of the "Concords" were built with an extra seat a little above and in the rear of the driver, so that three additional persons could ride there, making fourteen with the driver. Sometimes it became necessary to crowd an extra man on the box, making as many as fifteen persons who rode on this pattern of coach without much inconvenience. I once made the trip from Denver to Atchison when there were fourteen passengers besides the driver and myself, and the coach arrived at its destination on time.

Frequently, among a load of stage passengers, there would be from one to three of sufficient avoirdupois to tip the beam at 250. Being jostled about when the road was rough, it would be anything but pleasant for nine crowded passengers, inside a coach, riding six days and nights between the Missouri and Denver. It occasionally happened that there would be a fat woman among the passengers, perhaps weighing 250 pounds. It was a great relief, however, for such people, at the end of each ten or twelve miles, to get out and exercise two or three minutes while the horses were being changed at the station.

A person weighing perhaps less than 125 pounds, while being crowded by a fat fellow, would think it an imposition to be obliged to pay as much for passage as a man twice as heavy. Still the stage company made no distinction. A Falstaff or a Daniel Lambert could ride as an overland passenger for exactly what Gen. Tom Thumb or his wife would be obliged to pay. The fare from Atchison to Denver by stage, until the summer of 1863, was $75; to Salt Lake, $150; to Placerville, $225. Owing to the continued rise in the gold quotations and the correspondingly marked depreciation in greenbacks, when the civil war was raging at its fiercest, the fare to Denver was subsequently advanced to $125. Later, in 1865, it was put up to $175 to Denver, $350 to Salt Lake, and in proportion the balance of the trip.

On the 1st of April, 1866, there was a reduction in fare by the stage line, as follows: Atchison or Omaha to Virginia City, Mont., $330; Atchison to Salt Lake, $250; while the Atchison to Denver fare remained $175. The advance in rates of fare from time to time appeared to make very little difference in the extent of the passenger traffic. Still there was an occasional party whose time was not limited who would buy a team and go across by private conveyance, being on the road at least three weeks between the Missouri river and Denver, rather than pay what he considered an extortionate price for passage. Nearly every business man, however, whose time was money to him, took passage on the stage, no matter what the fare might be.

The number of the great overland mail route awarded to Ben. Holladay was 10,773. The contract price for conveying the first six-times-a-week letter mail from the Missouri river to Placerville, with all the way-mail to Denver, Salt Lake, and intermediate points, was $1,000,000 per annum, from July 1, 1861, to June 30, 1864. Beginning July 1, 1864, the pay for conveying the same mail was at the rate of $840,000 per annum.

Holladay was awarded, in 1865, contracts for carrying the mail on the routes from Nebraska City and Omaha to Kearney City, the latter point located about two miles west of Fort Kearney—just outside the limits of the military reserve. On the former route he received $7000 and on the latter $14,000 per annum. At Kearney City ("Dobytown") these two routes connected with the overland stage line.

Between Atchison and Salt Lake City, from July 1, 1864, to June 14, 1868, the annual pay for transporting the overland mail was $365,000, and during that period Holladay was paid $1,352,796.05. On the same route, from June 15, 1868, to September 30, 1868, the pay was at the rate of $347,648, and Holladay received from Government, for those three and one-half months, the sum of $102,193.23.

Both the C. O. C. and L. & P. P. express lines subsequently passed into control of other parties, and, being shortly afterward consolidated, the new line was for some time thereafter known as the "Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express." Gen. Bela M. Hughes was attorney for this corporation, and made desperate struggles to overcome the financial difficulties that were constantly threatening the new company, but, with all his efforts, was unsuccessful in averting the final disaster. Creditors came forward and continued to press the corporation. Afterward it became necessary to borrow, from time to time, large sums to meet the numerous urgent demands and keep the enterprise from going to the wall. The money was always obtained from Ben. Holladay, the company giving a first mortgage, of course, on all the property of the entire line. The old company finally, after being in existence less than six months, collapsed, and all its property, from Atchison to Placerville, passed, by foreclosure, into the hands of Holladay.

In relation to the breaking up of the first overland mail line, and the establishment of numerous new lines as the result, Mr. David Street, of Denver, writes me, under date of September 16, 1901, as follows:

"In regard to what Holladay got from the C. O. C. & P. P. Express Company: he got all they owned, of course, for his mortgage covered their entire line; but they only owned up to Salt Lake City (from the Missouri river to Salt Lake City), with a branch line from old Julesburg (the upper California crossing on the Platte river) to Denver. When the "Southern Overland" or Overland Mail Company, as the name was, was broken up by the Confederates, during the early days of the war of the rebellion or civil war, the Confederates captured some of it. What they did not get was moved north, and some of it was put on east of Salt Lake and sold to the C. O. C. & P. P. Express Company. The remainder (enough to stock the line, or partly do so) was put on from Salt Lake to Virginia City, Nev.; from Virginia City, Nev., to Sacramento, Cal., was the Pioneer stage line, owned by Louis and Chas. McLane. Louis McLane was president of Wells, Fargo & Co. at the time they bought Mr. Holladay out. The Pioneer line was splendidly equipped with fine Concord coaches and six-horse teams. They had a heavy travel, as it was the palmy days of the Comstock mines. There was also another line between Virginia City and Sacramento, that crossed the Sierra Nevada mountains *via* the Dutch Flats route, owned by the California Stage Company, and divided the business with the Pioneer line. But to go back, the C. O. C. & P. P. Express Company, the Overland Mail Company and the Pioneer stage line formed the through line from Atchison to Sacramento, and carried the overland mails under the unexpired contract of the Overland Mail Company from Memphis, Tenn., *via* El Paso to San Diego, Cal., permission having been obtained from the post-office de partment transferring it to this route; the Overland Mail Company subletting to the C. O. C. & P. P. Express Company and the Pioneer stage line the portions of the route covered by their respective lines. Upon the expiration of that contract it was relet for four years, Holladay being the successful bidder, and subletting to the Overland Mail Company and the Pioneer stage line; the Overland Mail Company having that name, preventing Holladay adopting it. That was the name he always wanted. The Overland Mail Company passed into the possession of Wells, Fargo & Co. some time before they bought Holladay out; they acquired it in about the same way Holladay did the C. O. C. & P. P. Express Company—by advancing of money, or loans; first commenced as advances on quarterly mail payments and ended in mortgages and foreclosures."

The number of mail pouches carried west on the stage-coach six times a week ran about as follows: San Francisco, two; Sacramento, one to two; Virginia City and Carson, Nev., one each; Salt Lake, one to two; Denver, two. In addition, there was a way pouch which was opened at the few offices along the route—Daniel's Ranch, Valley City, Fort Kearney, Cottonwood Springs, Fremont's Orchard, Latham, and Fort Bridger.

Some queer things now and then were sent through the mail in early days on the overland route. Well do I remember one in the spring of 1864, while I was stationed as local mail agent at Latham, Colo. Complaints were numerous, as they had been for a long time before, that mail robberies were being committed every little while, somewhere along the route. Valuable letters were being abstracted at different points, but no one, it appears, could find the guilty parties. One day when the mail-coach came in from the west, I unlocked and opened, as I did every day, both the east- and west-bound regular way pouch. While the contents of the sack were being shaken out, I was startled by the sound of something that fell with a heavy thud on the table. In assorting this mail I came across two naked bars of precious metal—one of gold and one of silver—with simply a plain tag attached to each. One of the bars was directed to a firm in New York, the other to a Philadelphia firm. I called the attention of the stage agent to them, remarking, as I placed them back in the pouch and locked it, that I thought it was "a very careless way to send treasure loose in the mail; that such stuff ought to be registered or go by express in charge of a messenger." Having never before seen or even heard of anything of the kind going in such manner through the mail, I never suspected, at that time, that the bars of specie were placed in the mail-bag as "decoys."

After I had finished assorting the contents of the pouch and had made up the Eastern way mail and locked the pouch, I learned that an agent who had come through from the West had been watching me from an adjoining room, as he had also watched every postmaster and deputy from the Pacific coast who had opened the pouch at the different offices along the line. After having seen through the cracks of an adjoining room, without my knowledge, every movement I had made in the distribution of the mail, the man knocked at the door for admission into my office. Immediately after coming in he pulled from his pocket and handed to me his credentials as a special agent of the post-office department. After talking with me a few seconds he then explained the decoys which he said he had observed I had not failed to notice. They were quite a temptation. Whether the precious bars of metal were "gobbled" by any crooked Nasby or postal employee between Latham and the Missouri river I never learned; but the special agent occupied a seat in the stage-coach from its terminus at the western slope of the Sierras to Fort Kearney, where he changed to the Western Stage Company's line, on which he went to his destination at Omaha.

Among some of the remarkably quick rides across the plains during the staging days, there was one made by Holladay while he operated the overland stage line, in the '60's. At one time, while on the Pacific coast looking after his interests, he was advised by telegraph that important business demanded his early presence in New York. Accordingly he notified his division agents to have everything in readiness, and he made the trip by special coach, from the western terminus to Atchison, Kan., a distance of nearly 2000 miles, in twelve days, two hours, beating the regular daily schedule five days.

This was a rather expensive ride for the noted stage man, the journey costing him, it is said, about $20,000 in the wear and tear of stock, vehicles, and other necessary expenses incurred while making the noted trip. However, costly as this journey proved to be, Holladay knew it would be a great advertisement for his overland stage line, being the quickest trip ever made across the plains by the Concord coach, and it was noted all over the continent, for the time had never been excelled except by the "Pony Express," which was operated from April, 1860, until the completion of the Pacific telegraph, in September, 1861.

Another overland stage trip of note was in 1865, when Hon. Schuyler Colfax made the journey, accompanied by Samuel Bowles, of the Springfield (Mass.) *Republican*, and Albert D. Richardson, the latter at the time staff correspondent of the Boston *Journal*, who was also remembered as the noted army correspondent of the New York *Tribune*. This journalistic trio made the ride from Atchison to Denver, 653 miles, in four and one-half days; one of the quickest and most remarkable journeys ever made by the overland route. From Salt Lake to Virginia City, Nev., 575 miles, the ride was made in seventy-two hours, on which a drive of eight miles was covered in thirty-two minutes. A stretch of seventy-two miles—on the extreme western division into Placerville—was made in seven hours, including stops, being the same piece of road traversed by Horace Greeley while on his overland journey down the Sierra Nevada, when he had his exciting experience with Hank Monk, the well-known Pacific slope driver, in the summer of 1859.

Speaking of a few noted quick journeys across the plains recalls to mind the fact that, in February, 1866, a stage-coach carrying the mail made the trip from Santa Fé, to Kansas City, a distance of over 800 miles, in eleven days; up to that date, the fastest time by stage ever made between those two points.

But there was a quicker trip made in the early '50's, on a wager, over the same route, by F. X. Aubrey, the daring Western frontier rider, who rode from the New Mexican capital to the Missouri river in eight days. On the completion of his journey he was so exhausted that he had to be lifted from his horse.

In the transportation of the mail by the overland route in 1864, when the Indians were executing all kinds of hellish deeds so frequent among the savage races, the expenses of the company were enormous. On the western division of the line—between Salt Lake City and Austin, Nev.—all the grain used by the stage animals was purchased in Utah of the Mormons, for which twenty-five cents a pound was paid. Prices ruled high all over the country in 1864, but such prices as these were enough to cripple any company. The following year the stage proprietor raised his own grain in the desert region. A tract of over 800 acres was cultivated, and sown to oats and barley, and, put under irrigation, yielded from thirty to fifty bushels to the acre, thus saving for the company upwards of $50,000.

On the 28th of April, 1866, the Holladay Overland Mail and Express coaches started from both Topeka and Denver, running daily, over the Smoky Hill route. The stages were moved west every few weeks, as fast as fifty or more miles of track were put down and accepted by the Government railway commissioners.

In August following, all the overland mail for California, Salt Lake, Colorado, etc., was sent to the end of track over the Kansas division of the Union Pacific; thence over the Smoky Hill route by stage to its destination.

In the latter part of October, 1866, Junction City became the starting-point for the overland stages. The distance almost due west from St. Louis to Junction City is 420 miles. It was shown at that time that, in a fast run across the plains, letters were carried *via* the Smoky Hill route from New York to Denver in five days—a speed never before accomplished or even attempted from the Colorado metropolis.

This unprecedented dispatch in postal affairs caused a waking up of the authorities at Washington, and resulted in the early transfer to this route of the British letter mail for China and San Francisco. Commenting on the foregoing at the time, the Atchison *Daily Free Press* of October 29, 1866, said: "There will be no call for mule and ox trains on the great plains a twelvemonth hence. 'Westward the march of empire takes its way.'"

Ben. Holladay continued at the head of the overland line for almost five years. Taking possession of it in December, 1861, he remained with it for some time after the civil war, when he disposed of everything, including the stations, rolling-stock, animals, etc., in the latter part of 1866, to Wells, Fargo & Co., a firm known all over the Pacific coast, besides enjoying a national reputation. Wells, Fargo & Co. operated the line for some time between the Missouri river and the capital of California. They also operated a score or more of branch lines leading to the various mining camps then springing up in the West and Northwest territories. With their vast wealth and wide experience as mail and express carriers on the frontier—doing a business of many millions of dollars annually—they were, in a measure, considered public benefactors.

The firm name—Wells, Fargo & Co.—finally became as familiar as household words throughout almost every portion of the country. In their employ were an immense number of men as agents and drivers. The firm had the reputation of being extremely liberal with all their employees, paying their overland drivers in some instances upwards of $200 a month, according to experience and ability, and considering the hazard of being waylaid by road-agents, the genteel name then given to bands of frontier highway robbers.

In the latter part of 1866, through the efforts of Gen. Bela M. Hughes, the territorial legislature of Colorado granted a charter for the Holladay Overland Mail and Express Company, which shortly afterward absorbed a sort of rival line known as the "Butterfield Overland Despatch," a stage, express and freight line in operation a year or more between Atchison and Denver over the Smoky Hill route. At the head of the "Despatch" was D. A. Butterfield, an early citizen of Denver, but then a prominent business man at Atchison. It was not long thereafter until a general consolidation of stage lines followed, including the Wells, Fargo & Co., the Overland Mail Company, the Pioneer Stage Company, and all the other stage and express companies between the Missouri river and the Pacific ocean.

The new enterprise was successful in all respects, for the noted firm of Wells, Fargo & Co. were at the head of the movement and became the proprietors of the new company. It was capitalized at ten million dollars, and the new name—Wells, Fargo & Co.—was subseqently ratified by special act of the Colorado territorial legislature. This consolidation practically gave Wells, Fargo & Co. exclusive control of all the express and stage routes between the Missouri river and the Pacific, with numerous branch lines in Nevada, Montana, and Idaho—in fact, the entire Pacific slope. Over the great stage lines as controlled by them, Wells, Fargo & Co. transported, until the completion of the first transcontinental railroad, all the overland mail and express matter, after which the owners disposed of all their stage interests and took up the express and banking business.

There has been a mighty change in postal matters on the frontier in the last third of a century. By the overland stage line, in the early '60's, it required seventeen days for a letter to go from the Missouri river to Placerville, a distance of something over 1900 miles. In 1869, after the completion of the first transcontinental railway, letters were carried all the way from New York and Boston to the far-western metropolis on the great ocean—about twice the distance—inside of six days.

Over forty years have gone by since the first mail route overland by stage-coach was established to the Pacific *via* Salt Lake. Few can realize what vast changes have taken place and the improvements that have been made in facilitating the dispatch of the mails on the frontier since that time. The trip from the Missouri river with the mail to the Mormon capital can now be made by the fast railway-train on the Union Pacific in as many hours as it required days when the first monthly mail route was established, in the '50's, and which was afterward changed to a weekly during the prospective Mormon war, to accommodate Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston's army, quartered at Salt Lake for some months in 1858–'59.

Going back a generation to the time of overland mail, express and staging days between the Missouri river and the Pacific, it appears much like a dream. The Concord stage-coaches transported, for a period of little over ten years, the entire overland letter mail. They likewise carried all the letter mail that came across the Atlantic for British Columbia, Australia, and New Zealand. In addition, the stage-coaches carried thousands of passengers, millions of dollars in money, priceless papers and documents and many valuable packages across the plains to all the vast territory west of the Rocky Mountains. Those strongly built nine-passenger vehicles, pulled by four- or six-horse (or mule) teams were, in their day, familiar and conspicuous objects to all persons journeying across the country by the overland route.

Those pioneer days were full of excitement and adventure, because there was so much on the frontier to be seen. It was always a pleasure, however, to look at the old stages as they regularly departed and arrived. It is difficult to imagine what has become of those hundreds of coaches that were the "passenger-cars" before the days of railroads west of the Missouri. Those vehicles that moved so gently over the rolling prairies; that traversed the fertile valleys; that glided so smoothly across the plains; that rumbled along through gulches; that slowly climbed their winding way to the summit of the Rocky Mountain passes; that thundered on through rugged and precipitous mountain gorges and cañons; that moved slowly through the sandy deserts and alkali plains of the "Great Basin"; that passed along the parched valley of the sluggish Carson; that slowly wound their way over the summit of the Sierras, and finally rolled on down to the western terminus of the great stage line, at what was known in pioneer days as "Hangtown," are now only a remembrance. Scarcely one of the old vehicles can be found. They were all hung on the thorough-brace style of springs, which has made the old Concord such a favorite stage-coach by all who have ridden in it.

A few only of these historic old stages have been gathered up, and are to be seen connected with traveling shows. Col. William F. Cody ("Buffalo Bill") was for many years the owner of one of the most-noted and conspicuous ones. He came into possession of it in the heart of the Rockies. Subsequently he took it with his "Wild West" across the Atlantic, and exhibited it in many of the leading cities of Europe. Still later it was a prominent attraction at the great Columbian Exposition in Chicago.

This remarkable coach was built by the Abbot-Downing Company, at Concord, N. H., in 1863. It was one of thirty-two similar vehicles ordered by Louis McLane, of San Francisco, who at the time was president of the Pioneer Stage Company, of California, for which the coaches were designed. In shipping this stage-coach to its destination, it was sent from Boston by the ocean route around Cape Horn on the clipper ship *General Grant*, a distance of 19,000 miles, reaching the Golden Gate some time in 1864.

For a long time thereafter it was used on one of the prominent mountain stage lines in operation to the mines of northern California. Later it found its way across the Sierras on the overland line, subsequently reaching the Rockies, where, for some time, it was used in Wyoming, in the exciting days of early staging in Deadwood. It has since been known as the "Deadwood Coach."

On one occasion in London, by special invitation, it happened that four European kings were seated in the old coach for a ride, while the Prince of Wales sat on the box alongside Buffalo Bill, the driver. While the distinguished party were enjoying the drive, the prince jokingly remarked to the renowned showman, "This coach now holds a big poker hand." "Yes," says the showman; "four kings inside and the 'joker' on the box."

For a long time the old coach, drawn by six of the best horses ever hitched to a stage, did service in the mountains on the "Overland." The noted vehicle attracted crowds everywhere. Buffalo Bill regarded it as one of the prime attractions of his

"Wild West" show. "And well he might," says a Concord newspaper; "its battered sides, its paintless panels, its missing boot, its rusty iron, are eloquent of hard knocks. The vicissitudes of its career are marvelous. In the day of its prosperity, glistening with new paint and varnish, bedecked with gold leaf, every strap new and shining, it traversed the most deadly mail route in the West, from Cheyenne to Deadwood *via* Laramie, and through a country alive with the banditti of the plains."

The coach route was full of peril, but it lay through a picturesque country. During its first season in the Deadwood region, the more dangerous places on the route were Buffalo Gap, Lame Johnny Creek, Red Cañon, and Squaw Gap. These were all made famous by scenes of slaughter and the deviltry of the highwaymen. Of the latter, the more conspicuous were "Curley" Grimes, killed at Hogan's Ranch; "Peg-legged" Bradley; Bill Price, who was killed on the Cheyenne river; Dunk Blackburn, now serving a term in the Nebraska penitentiary, and a number of others of the same class—representing the most fearless of the road-agents who did their work on the frontier.

The first attack on the noted stage resulted in the death of John Slaughter, a son of the former city marshal of Cheyenne. He was filled with buckshot and fell from the box to the ground. The team ran away with passengers and mail and brought up all right at Greeley's Station. This attack occurred at White Wood Cañon. The body of young Slaughter was recovered, taken to Deadwood and thence carried to Cheyenne, where it was buried. It was here that the old coach received its "baptism of fire." In a few months afterward it was again attacked, and some years later it went through a number of similar experiences.

A terrific attack was made on it by Sioux Indians, but the assault was successfully repelled; not, however, until the two lead horses were killed. Another attack was made when a party of commercial travelers were ambushed, and a Mr. Liebman, of Chicago, was killed, and his companion shot through the shoulder.

The stage was soon afterward fitted up as a treasure coach, and it at once became an object of special interest to the highwaymen. As a means of protection, a strong force of shot-gun messengers accompanied the old vehicle, and some time elapsed before the robbers succeeded in accomplishing their purpose. Prominent among "these messengers were Scott Davis, a splendid scout, and one of the self-appointed undertakers of many of the lawless characters of the neighborhood; Boone May, one of the best pistol shots in the Rocky Mountain regions, who killed Bill Price in the streets of Deadwood, together with 'Curley' Grimes, one of the road-agents; Jim May, a worthy brother—a twin in courage if not in birth. Few men have had more desperate encounters than he, and the transgressors of the law have had many an occasion to feel the results of the keen eye and strong arm whenever it has become necessary to face men who are prepared to 'die with their boots on.' Still another of these border heroes (for such they may be justly termed) is Gail Hill, late deputy sheriff of Deadwood, and his frequent companion was Jesse Brown, an old-time Indian fighter, who has a record of incident and adventure that would make a book. These men constituted a sextette of as brave fellows as could be found on the frontier, and their names are all well known in that country.

"At last, however, some of them came to grief. The bandits themselves were old fighters. The shrewdness of one party was offset by that of the other, and, on an unlucky day, the celebrated Cold Spring tragedy occurred. The station had been captured, and the road-agents secretly occupied the place. The stage arrived in its usual manner, and, without suspicion of danger, the driver, Gene Barnett, halted at the stable door. An instant afterward a volley was delivered that killed Hughey Stevenson, sent the buckshot through the body of Gail Hill, and dangerously wounded two others of the guards. The bandits then captured the outfit, amounting to some $60,000 in gold.

"On another occasion the coach was attacked, and, when the driver was killed, saved by a woman—Martha Canary, better known at the present time in the wild history of the frontier as 'Calamity Jane.' Amid the fire of the attack she seized the lines, and, whipping up the team, safely brought the coach to its destination.

"When Buffalo Bill returned from his scout with General Crook, in 1876, he rode in this self-same stage, bringing with him the scalps of several of the Indians whom he had met. When, afterwards, he learned that it had been attacked and abandoned, and was lying neglected on the plains, he organized a party, and, starting on the trail, rescued and brought the vehicle into camp. With the sentiment that attaches to a man whose life has been identified with the excitement of the far West, the scout has now secured the coach from Colonel Voorhees, the manager of the Black Hills stage line, and hereafter it will play a different rôle in its history from that of inviting murder and being the tomb of its passengers. . . .

"In London, it carried the Prince of Wales on an inside seat when the 'attack on the mail' was depicted in the 'Wild West' arena. The President of the French republic, the child King of Spain, the Emperor of Germany, His Holiness Pope Leo XIII, have examined the battered structure with interest, but nowhere has the 'Deadwood Mail' been greeted with more eager and intelligent interest than here in Concord,* the city of its birth, where the very men who made it gave it welcome, and where the president of the Abbot-Downing Company, after careful inspection, guaranteed its running-gear for another indefinite term of service. The 'Deadwood Mail' was built 'pon honor by a company which has an uninterrupted story of business success for eighty-two years, and whose pay-roll bears among its 250 names those of twenty men whose length of consecutive employment individually exceeds forty-four years, and forty-three who have drawn their pay from the same concern for more than thirty-eight years each. And all of them, and the thousands of others who saw the old relic yesterday, are hoping that its future visits here will occur at less intervals than thirty-two years."

It was on the 4th of July, 1895, that this famous old coach was exhibited in the "Wild West" show at Concord, N. H., and there personally viewed and identified by the man who built it over thirty years before. Naturally it attracted much attention and drew crowds of enthusiastic admirers. No one enjoyed it so much as those connected with the great manufactory where it was built.

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*Quoted from a Concord newspaper.

Accordingly it was fixed up for the occasion, six mules were hitched to it, and a photograph taken of it, with its veteran builders seated inside, and no less a personage than the renowned Buffalo Bill sitting on the box holding the lines. On the side of the coach was placed the following inscription:

1863. HOME AGAIN. 1895.

This remarkable stage-coach has been attacked by Indians and highwaymen on the "Overland," and has since journeyed through the new and a considerable portion of the old world. In its early days, it traveled hundreds of thousands of miles in the mail, express and passenger service. For years it has been looked upon and cherished as a sort of priceless relic. Inside of it have ridden many high officials, both civil and military, in America, and, while across the briny deep, a number of the crowned heads of Europe have ridden in it.

The old and somewhat time-worn coach has become a truly historic vehicle, and it is doubtful if anything much less than its weight in gold would at one time have tempted its owner to part with it. It is now preserved in the Smithsonian Institution, at Washington, and it is not likely that it will ever again be seen on the public highways.

CHAPTER IV.

THE OVERLAND STAGE LINE.

THE arrival of the first overland mail at either end of the new route was an important event, and, quite naturally, it was believed to be an occasion worthy of celebration with considerable pomp and ceremony. At St. Joseph there was public speaking, enlivening music by brass bands, and general rejoicing by the masses.

Before the final change, making Atchison the headquarters and starting-point for the mail, the road from thence westward intersected the road from St. Joseph at Kennekuk. The distance from Atchison due west to Kennekuk, along the "Parallel" road, on which the stages ran, was twenty-four miles, while it was about thirty-five miles by the route laid out from Kennekuk to St. Joseph *via* Lewis, Troy, and Wathena. Thus there was a saving of about nine miles' travel in favor of Atchison. That distance saved and the time thereby gained was an important point in its favor, and the facts were so plain that they could not be ignored by the post-office department, and were important points to be considered by the Government in the transportation of the enormous letter mail overland.

In due time an order came from the post-office department making Atchison the future starting-point for the overland mail. As might naturally be expected from such an important change, St. Joseph—at that early date having a population two or three times as large as Atchison—made a strong resistance and entered a vigorous protest. All the protesting, however, failed to improve the situation for the Missouri city. The change having been ordered, in due time all matters connected with the important mail route settled down peacefully at Atchison. Of course, the result was of great benefit to Atchison, and, in consequence, renewed life and activity were at once infused into the infant city. Being the starting-point for the daily four- and six-horse Concord overland stage-coaches, with the additional advantage of railway, steamboat and telegraph connections, gave the place considerable prominence and helped very materially to make it one of the leading commercial towns on the "Big Muddy."

The distance by the overland stage line from Atchison through to Placerville was 1913 miles, and, since it had supplanted the southern or Butterfield route, which previously had gone from St. Louis and Memphis southwest in the form of a semicircle, it was the longest, and by all odds the most important, stage line in America, if not on the face of the globe.

Including Atchison and Placerville, there were 153 stations, averaging about twelve and one-half miles apart. The fare through was $225—a fraction less than twelve cents a mile, and, when the fare was at its lowest, as high as $2000 was on some days taken in at the Atchison office alone for passengers destined for Placerville. Between Atchison and Denver the fare at first was $75, or eight and two-thirds cents a mile; to Salt Lake, $150. Transient way fares were from twelve and one-half to fifteen cents a mile. Each passenger was allowed twenty-five pounds of baggage, all excess being charged at the rate of one dollar per pound. This was in the early part of 1863. The fare to Denver, subsequently—while the civil war was yet in progress and gold kept steadily appreciating in value—was advanced to $100; a few months later to $125; and, before the close of the war, it cost $175—nearly twenty-seven cents a mile—for a ride on the overland stage from the Missouri river to Denver. This was for the fare alone; the meals were extra.

There was a remarkable similarity in many of the stations built along the Platte on the stage route for a distance of at least 250 miles when the line was put in operation. Most of the buildings were erected by the stage company, and usually they were nearly square, one-story, hewn, cedar-log structures, of one to three rooms. When constructed with only one room, often partitions of muslin were used to separate the kitchen from the dining-room and sleeping apartments.

The roof was supported by a log placed across from gable to gable, by which poles were supported for rafters placed as close as they could be put together, side by side. On these were placed some willows, then a layer of hay was spread, and this was covered with earth or sod; and, lastly, a sprinkling of coarse gravel covered all, to keep the earth from being blown off. The logs of which most of the first stations were constructed were procured in the cañons south of the Platte, in the vicinity of Cottonwood Springs, in the southern part of western Nebraska.

Nearly all the "swing" stations along the Platte—in fact, over the entire line—were similar in construction and closely resembled one another. A number of the "home" stations, however, differed somewhat in several respects, being two or three times larger, and provided with sheds, outbuildings, and a number of other conveniences.

The station, stable and outbuildings at old Julesburg were built when that was the point where the through coaches forded the South Platte for Salt Lake and California, going up the Rocky Ridge road along Lodge Pole creek. Besides being the point where the stages on the main line crossed the Platte, it also became an important junction for upwards of four years. Here the branch line, the Leavenworth and Pike's Peak Express, started by Jones, Russell & Co. and subsequently absorbed by the Central Company, and known as the "Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company," ran their stages up the South Fork of the Platte for 200 miles beyond to Denver.

At Julesburg—in early staging days one of the most important points along the Platte—were erected the largest buildings of the kind between Fort Kearney and Denver. They were built of cedar logs, hauled from near Cottonwood Springs by oxen, a distance of 105 miles.

Most of the stations east of Denver for about a hundred miles were constructed of rough lumber hauled from the mountains down the Platte valley. The buildings were decidedly plain, the the boards being of native Colorado pine, nailed on the frame perpendicularly. Only a few of the stations west of the Big Blue river at Marysville were weather-boarded. With this exception, all were plain log structures between the latter point and Fort Kearney. A station on the line where there was no family living—only a stock tender—was called a "swing" station.

The first sod buildings seen on the line were at Fort Kearney, a few having been erected in pioneer overland freighting, pony express and staging days. The post-office, built of sod—also used as the first telegraph office at the fort—although small, was in the early '60's one of the most prominent of the few buildings of that character between the Missouri river and the Rockies.

Strange as it may appear, the stages most of the time continued to go out well filled. Often passengers overland would be booked several days ahead before they would get a seat. Sometimes it was necessary to run an extra. Notably, this frequently occurred in the spring of 1864, in consequence of the new gold diggings opening up in the Northwest, at Bannock. Time, then, when fortunes were being made so rapidly, was money to the hurried business man.

It occasionally happened that a person anxious to get to Denver to attend to some matters of vital importance, or to go to the Bannock mines as quickly as the stage could carry him, would buy a seat belonging to another man and pay a handsome price for it rather than wait several days for his turn. Thus, from twenty-five to fifty dollars extra was sometimes paid to get a person to give up his seat to one whose business was so urgent he must go through on the first stage regardless of the cost.

A timid person, on taking a seat inside or even on top of a four-horse or six-horse stage-coach, invariably becomes anxious, and while traveling over a rugged mountain road this anxiety at times is almost fear. Any sensible person who is obliged to ride behind a spirited team in the hands of an inexperienced or careless driver must necessarily undergo the same misgivings. For this reason, it was the aim of the stage officials to employ none but careful, experienced men, and, when possible, only such were selected for the responsible duty of "knight of the reins." A prudent, level-headed driver does not fail to realize that in his hands are held the lives of a load of passengers, and, usually, he is as anxious to please all such as they are to have a safe and comfortable ride to their journey's end.

Like those traveling by rail to-day, there were all kinds of people on the move in the early '60's as passengers overland by the old stage-coach. Usually they were more exclusive, however, on the stage, than they are on the cars. Often private parties of two, four or six would charter a coach and occupy it all by themselves on the trip. Some of them would have a "high old time." Usually they would be provided with several cases of some of the "good things" that could not easily be obtained along the route. They were usually provided with air pillows, which they would inflate, and thus have a good, soft place on which to lay their heads for a comfortable sleep, when night came on.

One only slightly acquainted with that part of the plains over which the stages ran would naturally suppose that living out there in the early '60's was the most lonesome existence imaginable, and that, to a woman especially, it must have been very severe and trying. There can be no doubt that, to a certain extent, it *was* lonesome. But many of the women—scarce as they were on the overland route--appeared to enjoy themselves occasionally quite as well as many of the men.

While neighbors were scarce—the stations being on an average about twelve and one-half miles apart—dances frequently took place at some of the more important or "home" stations, and it was not unusual for some of the women living nearest to ride the distance on horseback or to get on the stage-coach and go from ten to thirty-five miles, dance perhaps the greater part of the night, and ride back home on the next return coach. Sometimes, as I happen to know, they would ride fifty miles each way to and from a dance. This distance would take in most of the women along the line at stations and ranches embracing a territory east and west for about 100 miles, and they would think nothing of it. Strangers along the route dropping in at the station during the dance would often be puzzled—simply amazed—and naturally wonder where all the women came from in such a sparsely settled country. Most of the ladies on the overland route appeared to take great delight in dancing, as it was about their only social enjoyment. They were only too eager and willing to ride the long distance by stage for the opportunity to have a friendly visit with their lady friends and neighbors and, at the same time, spend the night in "tripping the light, fantastic toe."

It was a rough trip to California in the early days, no matter how taken. To be sure there were a few short lines running cars on the Pacific coast, but, barring these, the Hannibal & St. Joseph, in the spring of 1859, was the farthest western line of railway on the continent. The shortest route between the Missouri river and the vast ocean on the west was about 2000 miles. The mode of conveyance at that time was by ox, horse and mule team over the plains, across three lofty chains of mountain ranges. The quickest way to reach the Pacific metropolis then was by the Overland Mail Company's stage-coach by the southern route from St. Louis, a distance of nearly 3000 miles. It took twenty-three days to make the trip. To go by ocean steamer *via* the Isthmus, over three weeks was consumed between New York and San

OVERLAND STAGE-COACH LEAVING ATCHISON.

Francisco. In any event, the trip overland was considered a hazardous one, across the mighty expanse of country, a portion of it beset by savages, and known upwards of half a century ago as the "Great American Desert."

Usually it was a delightful trip across the rolling prairies between the Missouri river and the Platte. In making the run the course of nearly all the winding streams was plainly visible, fringed here and there with miniature forest belts. The rich, dark soil of the Kansas and Nebraska prairies in summer was covered with tall, luxuriant native grass, while the atmosphere in many places was perfumed with a delicate aroma wafted by soft breezes from numerous beautiful wild flowers of various tints.

In going overland, a stage-coach left Atchison, the eastern starting-point, every morning at eight o'clock, shortly after the arrival of the mail by train on the St. Joseph & Atchison railroad from the East. The mail came over the Missouri river on the steam ferry-boat *Ida* and was taken direct to the post-office, where it remained until loaded on the stage, and was then carried across the plains to California, six times a week. No mail arriving from the East on Monday morning, the coach that left Atchison that morning was in charge of a messenger, and was called a "messenger coach."

The messenger coach was loaded with express packages of various kinds, besides a strong iron box that two persons could handle, containing the treasure and the most valuable of the smaller packages. On the regular Concords the safe was carried in the front boot, under the driver's box. Whenever there happened to be an extra-big run of express packages (enough to comfortably fill the stage), no passengers were taken on that trip; but it was a very rare occurrence if the express coach left Atchison without at least one or more, and often it carried as many as half a dozen passengers, either for Denver, Salt Lake, or on through to the western terminus.

The charges on express matter other than gold dust, coin, or currency, between Atchison and Denver, was at the uniform rate of one dollar per pound. More express matter was carried to Denver, Central City and Black Hawk in 1863 than to all other points combined on the main stage line. The main line to the Pacific went a little north of west from Atchison, crossing the Big Blue river at Marysville, 100 miles west; thence continuing in a northwesterly course up the north side of the Little Blue river and over the divide into the Platte valley at Hook's station; thence up the south side of the Platte river, *via* Fort Kearney, Plum Creek, and Cottonwood Springs, to O'Fallon's Bluff.

Strange as it appears, that portion of the stage route from Atchison to Denver—like the original southern line from St. Louis to California—was in the form of a crescent, and near O'Fallon's the road was about 100 miles north of Denver. To reach the latter, a distance of nearly 300 miles had to be covered—more than half way to the Rockies. At O'Fallon's Bluff the stages touched the most northerly spot on the route between the Missouri river and the mountains—nearly 100 miles farther north than the original starting-point. Thence the road was almost due west for more than fifty miles to a point a little east of old Julesburg. From Julesburg the route was southwesterly to Denver, nearly 100 miles south of Julesburg, and practically on an air-line due west something less than 600 miles from Atchison.

The spot where old Julesburg was situated was always deemed quite a prominent point. Way back in the '50's, before it was named, its location gained for it considerable importance, as it was for a long time better known by freighters and pilgrims as the "Upper California Crossing."

In the latter part of 1861, the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company, having become greatly embarrassed financially, lost all control of their enterprise, and soon it fell into the hands of Ben. Holladay, the New York millionaire. Holladay, from time to time, it appears, had advanced the company large sums of money, and thus came into possession of the line. After reorganizing, the name was changed to the "Overland Stage Line." On taking possession, Holladay spent a large amount of money in making the "Overland" the best-equipped stage line in the country, as it was by far the longest and most important one. He bought a large number of the celebrated Concord stage-coaches, and spared no expense in picking up, all over the country, the best horses and mules to be found suitable for the work that was to be done. The most capable and experienced stage men to be found were employed; many new stations were built, to shorten the "drives"; and everything that could be devised was done to facilitate the transportation of the mail, and to make the trip more pleasant for passengers.

There were scores of drivers on the "Overland" route who had held the lines on some portion of nearly every division between the Missouri river and the Pacific ocean. A number of them were familiar with almost every mile of the road, and they often told me—especially while on the monotonous route along the south bank of the Platte—that they could make faster time and keep their stock in better conditon on the road between Atchison and Fort Kearney than on any other part of the road of equal distance on the long stage line.

For a greater part of 250 miles, embracing the eastern division, the line ran through a gently rolling prairie country, while along the Platte for nearly 400 miles, between Fort Kearney and Denver, it was, most of the way, a water grade—practically a dead pull—much more difficult to make the schedule run and at the same time keep the stock in the best condition for staging. One of the main obstacles along the Platte to impede the progress was frequent stretches of sand. The finest stock on the road, if there was any choice, was strung out on the eastern division. When coaches were behind time coming in from the west, there was little difficulty, if the roads were in good shape, to make up several hours' lost time between Fort Kearney and the Missouri river, landing passengers in Atchison, then the farthest western city in the country east of the Pacific having railroad connection with the East, North, and South.

Speeding down the Little Blue valley in Nebraska—especially when we were behind time—the passengers on the stage-coach thought that part of the route the easiest riding and pleasantest part of the journey between the Missouri river and the mountains. The country was unsurpassed; the scenery lovely beyond description. Now and then they thought they were making time second only to a veritable lightning express train. The boys would occasionally "let their teams out," and the speed made would fairly astonish some of the passengers who had been occupying seats in the old Concord for more than two weeks—from the western slope of the Sierras to the Missouri valley.

While coming in from Denver on one of my trips as messenger, early in the fall of 1863, the distance—653 miles—was covered in five days, eight hours. We came through sixteen hours ahead of schedule time, which was about four and one-half miles an hour, including all stops. The fastest time on any part of that journey was when we made fourteen miles in fifty-two minutes without a change, over the rolling prairies along the Little Blue valley, from Big Sandy to Thompson's, in southern Nebraska. On the coach were twelve passengers and nearly half a ton of mail and express matter, in addition to the driver and messenger. The time made between those two stations averaged a fraction over sixteen miles an hour. One team of four horses did the work, but it was one of the best stage teams that ever pulled a Concord coach between the mighty Missouri and the Golden Gate. For a fraction less than an hour, that ride of fourteen miles was one of the fastest ever made on the overland line.

For endurance it seemed that no animal could excel the mule, but when brisk work was wanted horses were almost invariably used. With few exceptions, for instance, the Benham and some other mule teams, horses were exclusively used on the stage line. One of the mule teams was known as the "spike" team. These animals hauled the stage for nearly eighteen miles through a sand bed from Junction to Fremont's Orchard, on the Denver division. It was a very good team, and was composed of five dark brown mules, nearly all of the same size. The two heaviest animals were on the wheel, then two a little lighter ahead, and still another and the lightest one was hitched single in the lead. The long-eared animals appeared to be much better adapted for work in the sandy region than horses and were used to better advantage in such places.

There were quite a number of strong secessionists on the "Overland" as there were firm Union men. Neither side hesitated to express itself when occasion demanded. A number of the employees did n't "care a continental," they said, how the war terminated, but as for putting themselves up as targets in the service of "Uncle Sam" at thirteen dollars a month—to do that they never would consent. They were being paid too well on the road. Drivers in the employ of the stage company received from $40 to $75 a month and board; stock tenders, $40 to $50; carpenters, $75; harness-makers and blacksmiths, $100 to $125; and division agents, $100 to $125.

On the Smoky Hill route, in the later '60's, when the Indians were so numerous and had begun to be troublesome and dangerous, the pay for division agents on the frontier was advanced to $200 a month for first-class men, and even then they were hard to get. The boys thought a scalp on the head was very much more valuable to them than the same in the hands of an Indian.

The messengers in charge of the express were the poorest-paid men in the employ of the stage company. They were obliged to ride outside on the box with the driver six days and nights without undressing, and exposed to all kinds of weather. They received $62.50 a month, and meals free on the road, but they were idle—that is, had a lay-over—nine days out of every three weeks; so that their real working time was somewhat reduced and their days of exposure that much lessened.

Holladay continued at the head of the great stage line for nearly five years. In the meantime he had come into possession of the Western Stage Company's routes from Omaha and Nebraska City to Fort Kearney. In 1867, having absorbed the Smoky Hill line, a rival corporation known as the "Butterfield Overland Despatch," the name of the consolidated lines was, by act of the territorial legislature of Colorado, changed to the "Holladay Overland Mail and Express Company." By this name the line was known until nearly all the great stage and express routes between the Missouri river and the Pacific ocean were bought up and consolidated under the name of "Wells, Fargo & Co.'s Express."

Before the daily overland mail went into operation, and when a stage went to Salt Lake only once a week, some of the boys on the line used to despise a coach almost wholly loaded up with public documents from Washington, but such mail matter came quite handy at times. Occasionally the drivers, as they themselves said, in rough weather, would get stalled going through a bad slough, and be unable to move. In that case they were obliged to take out sack after sack of the "Pub. Docs.," open the bags, and pile the massive books from the Government printing-office in the slough, and, by building a solid foundation with them, were thus enabled to pull the coach out of the mire.

It was the pride of almost every driver to keep his stock in fine condition, so that the animals would bear inspection by the division agents, superintendent and other officials who made frequent trips over the line, never failing to examine closely every animal and every part of the harness. Some drivers kept their harness well oiled, and it looked, after years of constant use, almost as nice as the day it left Concord.

In staging overland, it was all-day and all-night riding over the rolling prairies, as it was across the plains and over the rugged mountain passes. But one would enjoy the long all-night rides far better when going along the Platte river, especially when there was a moon, which lighted up the surrounding country, its silvery rays being reflected in the waters of the beautiful stream, which silently flowed along the great overland pathway.

"The moon, sweet regent of the sky,"

appeared to break the dreary monotony as one would sit up on the box alongside the driver, or with nine persons inside the coach, and in this way make the long, tiresome journey.

On the main line there were about 2750 horses and mules, the most of them regularly in use. There were from eight to twelve animals kept at each station. At some of the stations it was necessary to keep a few head of extra stock, as occasionally an animal would be liable to get lame, sick, or be crippled, and at times unable to work; hence the necessity of a few extra head where they could be got without delay.

The cost of the animals necessary for equipping the main line was about $500,000. The harness used by the stage company was of the very best Concord make, and cost in staging days, during the '60's, in the neighborhood of $150 for a complete set of four, or, say, $55,000 for the main line.

Feed for the stock was one of the important items of expense in running the great stage line. At each station there was annually consumed from forty to eighty tons of hay. The cost of hay in staging days was all the way from fifteen to forty dollars a ton. At the various stations it required about 20,000 tons annually to supply them, costing an average of about twenty-five dollars per ton, or, say, $500,000 per anum. In grain, each animal was apportioned an average of twelve quarts of corn daily, which then cost from two to ten cents a pound.

On portions of the Salt Lake and California divisions, oats and barley grown in Utah were used in place of corn, costing about as much for feed. Between Atchison and Denver—about one-third of the way across—at least 3,000,000 pounds (over 50,000 bushels) of corn were annually consumed, costing about $200,000. On each of the other two divisions—Denver to Salt Lake, and Salt Lake to Placerville—the cost was fully as much more for grain.

NAT. STEIN,
Agent at Denver and Salt Lake.
Photo. 1876.

R. L. PEASE,
Agent at Denver, Colo.
Photo. 1865.

JOHN N. TODD,
Agent at Boies City, Idaho.
Photo. 1865.

HUGO RICHARDS,
Agent at Atchison and Denver.
Photo. later '60's.

Every pound of corn shipped from Kansas and Nebraska to Denver cost in freight alone from nine to ten cents a pound, in overland staging days, in the '60's.

There were also on the main line—the most of them in constant use—about 100 Concord coaches, which, delivered, cost, in the early '60's, during war times, about $1000 each, or, say, an aggregate of $95,000. The company owned about one-half of the stations, besides thousands of dollars' worth of other miscellaneous property at different places along the route. It cost an enormous sum of money to equip and operate the "Overland." Prices for everything used in those days were way up, on the high-pressure scale.

There was a general superintendent of the line, an attorney, and a paymaster. There were also three division superintendents: one between Atchison and Denver, one between Denver and Salt Lake, and one between Salt Lake and Placerville. Each superintendent had charge of three divisions—something over 600 miles of road. There were nine division agents—one for about every 200 miles. Employed between Atchison and Denver there were three, and an equal number between Denver and Salt Lake, and Salt Lake and Placerville. Each division agent had charge of all property belonging to the stage company in his particular territory. He looked after the stock, the running of the stages, and also kept an eye on the stations and their keepers. He bought the hay and grain, which were distributed at the stations on his orders, and he also hired the drivers, stock tenders, blacksmith, harness-maker, carpenter, etc.

The position of division agent was one of trust, and the pay usually was at least $100 a month and board. In every instance an experienced, level-headed driver would be selected to fill the place. It was important that only good, capable and trustworthy men be chosen as division agents, for it meant thousands of dollars annually to the stage company.

Among the stage company's agents along in the '60's, whose names I remember, were Hugo Richards and Paul Coburn, at Atchison; a Mr. Creighton, W. A. Gillespie, George M. Lloyd and Ed. C. Hughes, alternately, at Fort Kearney; A. D. Shakespear at Cottonwood Springs, and afterwards at old Julesburg; Nat. Stein, Robert L. Pease, C. L. Dahler, W. A. Gillespie and Charles B. France at Denver; W. S. McIlvain at Latham; Judge

W. A. Carter at Fort Bridger; W. L. Halsey and Nat. Stein at Salt Lake; and John N. Todd at Boise City, Idaho. The names of the score or more of other agents from time to time employed have been obliterated from my memory. It would be a pleasure to recall them at this time.

Besides, there were employed several stock buyers, nine messengers, seventy-five drivers, twenty blacksmiths, several harness-makers and carpenters, and about 150 stock tenders. Hence it is a very reasonable estimate to place the entire equipment of the overland stage line, with cost of running it the first year after it went into daily operation, at not less than $2,425,000. The general superintendent of the line, Mr. Geo. K. Otis, resided in New York, and went over the route about once in three months, always accompanying the stage proprietor, Mr. Holladay, when he made a trip, once and sometimes twice a year, in his special coach.

It required nerve as well as capital to invest in a great frontier stage line between forty and fifty years ago, when so little was known of the vast country between the Missouri river and the Pacific. The stages were attacked by Indians in the early '50's, the mails lost, and drivers and passengers on a number of occasions were obliged to give up their lives. Thrilling accounts of heroic resistance and wonderful escapes have often been told of those early days.

Hon. John Doniphan, of St. Joseph, a Western pioneer and a most estimable citizen, says he remembers seeing a Mr. Kincaid, a Salt Lake trader, brought into the States with two arrow wounds; he had cut loose a stage horse and distanced the savages. He received two arrow shots as he fled, but managed to keep his steed until he fell, fainting from loss of blood, near a party of emigrants. He entirely recovered by the next year, when he again made a trip to Salt Lake, and may still be living at his home in New York.

My first trip on the "Overland" as messenger I think was the hardest two weeks' work, in many respects, I ever did. It was a long and tedious outdoor ride, with little sleep or rest. While it was almost an impossibility, at first, to sleep on the stage-coach, I made up for all losses later. I took a brief Rip Van Winkle snooze when I reached the west end of my journey. It was not a twenty years' sleep, by any means; but after I had closed my eyes it was twenty hours before any one could arouse me from my

W. A. GILLESPIE,
Agent at Fort Kearney and Denver.
Photo. early '60's.

GEO. M. LLOYD,
Agent at Fort Kearney.
Photo. 1865.

POST-OFFICE AND FIRST TELEGRAPH OFFICE, FORT KEARNEY. ***Page 65.***

peaceful slumbers. Remaining for two days in Denver, my return trip to Atchison, after my long sleep, was much easier made. I had become better acquainted with the old stage-coach, and had considerable rest on my way down the Platte and Little Blue valleys. On the whole, from what I observed, I know I had a remarkably pleasant trip, for providence had favored us with the most delightful weather.

The position of express messenger was one of the most responsible places held by the army of employees on the stage line. The messengers were entrusted with the safe-keeping of the treasure and other valuable packages transported back and forth, and often a fortune was placed in their charge. It was a terrible temptation to road-agents or highwaymen, who surely must have known that vast sums of money were at times carried by the stages, and there were hundreds of places on the route where two or three desperate characters could secrete themselves and hold up a coach or pick off a stage load of passengers, or even a squad or company of soldiers, for that matter. At the same time the pay for this service was not equal to that of other employees, when the work to be done is taken into account.

I never realized fully the dangers connected with the position of messenger on this stage line until I had resigned, after making thirty-two trips between the Missouri river and the Rockies, and riding, in the aggregate, a distance of 22,500 miles. The messengers simply took their lives in their hands. Those employed on the main line were obliged to ride six days and nights without taking off their clothes, catching what sleep they could from time to time while the stage was moving across the plains and over the mountain passes. Their place on the stage was supposed to be on the box, with the driver, and the safe containing the treasure was placed in the front boot, under the driver's feet.

Three messengers were constantly employed in the '60's on the line between Atchison and Denver, three between Denver and Salt Lake, and the same number between Salt Lake and Placerville. One messenger would be going west and one east on each division nearly all the time, while the other would be lying a week at Atchison, Denver or Salt Lake resting after making a round trip over his division. From Atchison to Denver was called the eastern division; Denver to Salt Lake, the mountain division; from Salt Lake to Placerville, the western division. Among those in the service as messenger from time to time, and whom I knew, given alphabetically, were the following:

Addoms, Henry.
Benham, William.
Butler, Preston.
Capen, James H.
Clement, Stephen.
Dickey, Dave.
Ellifrit, R. T.
Gaylord, William F.
Hughes, Joe.
Hudnet, William.
Letson, William W.
Lewis, E.
Lloyd, George M.
Mayfield, John N.
Millar, R. P. R.
Millar, Wm. L. H.
McClelland, William.
Pollinger, E. M.
Rodgers, Philip.
Rodgers, John.
Root, Frank A.
Sayrs, Henry M.
Stein, Nat.
Strong, Jud.
Spottswood, Robert J.
Thomas, Chester, jr.
West, Rodney P.
Wiley, C. P.
Wilson, Richard E.

WILLIAM L. H. MILLAR was for a short time one of the faithful messengers on the "Overland." He was born December 7, 1845, at Weston, Platte county, Missouri. His father died in 1858, his mother in 1886, at Lincoln, Neb. The family moved to Atchison, Kan., in April, 1859. Will, as the boys called him, was the first and only newsboy in Atchison at the breaking out of the civil war, handling the two leading St. Louis dailies at that day — the *Republican* and the *Democrat* — until April, 1862, when he went on the plains, driving four yoke of oxen. He made two trips to Denver, then quit, remaining in Colorado, however, until about February, 1863, when he returned to his home in Atchison. A few months later he was in Fort Riley as clerk in the sutler store, remaining until late in 1865. In July, 1866, he started for Salt Lake as a "mule whacker," driving a six-mule team. This train should have made the trip in fifty-five days, but on account of the Indians it was delayed. The redskins stampeded all the mules (eighty-four head) on Lodge Pole creek, where the Union Pacific railroad was since built. They were surrounded by the Indians, and the party with the train was held for five days until Government teams came to their relief and took them to Fort Saunders. There the owners contracted with Abner Loomis to take them to Salt Lake with ox teams, but it was late in November when they reached their destination, after encountering a great number of hardships. Soon after reaching the Mormon capital he began work as messenger on the overland stage line, running from Salt Lake City to Denver. While on this run he experienced many hardships and a number of dangers. The stage company then quit running messengers on that part of the route. In the spring of 1867 he made one run as messenger from Denver down the Platte. In making this trip the Indians chased old man Godfrey, the owner of Godfrey's ranch (called "Fort Wicked") — and at that time used as a stage station — to within gunshot of the coach he was on. Godfrey killed one of their number, but the savages stampeded something like seventeen head of horses around the station, belonging to Godfrey and the stage company. On account of delays by Indians, Millar was eleven days in making this run, and the whole trip was one round of excitement.

The day before this stage reached Godfrey's was an exciting one, for the coach had been attacked by Indians, and one of the bravest and best drivers, Ed. B. Kilburn, shot dead from the box, an account of which appears in another place. While making that trip Millar assisted in burying two Frenchmen at Bishop's ranch (just opposite North Platte City, at that time the end of the Union Pacific railroad) who were killed at Tourjon's ranch, on the east slope of O'Fallon's Bluff. In July of the same year he returned to Atchison, where he remained until February, 1871, when he went to White Cloud, Kan., then the northern terminus of the Atchison & Nebraska railroad, where he opened the express office for Wells, Fargo & Co., continuing as agent there until October, 1872. He then went on the Kansas Pacific railway as messenger from Kansas City to Denver, and, on January 1, 1874, was transferred to the same position on the Denver & Rio Grande railroad. On July 1 following he resigned his position on account of sickness in the family, and, in November, 1876, reentered the service with Wells, Fargo & Co., as messenger on the Kansas Pacific route, but quit in October, 1879, to engage in the produce commission business in Denver; he sold out in 1881. In August, 1883, he went into Wells, Fargo & Co.'s employ again on the Denver & Rio Grande road, running as messenger from Denver to Silverton. He quit the dufies of messenger in November, 1886, to engage in the real-estate business in Denver. In this he made money fast, but the crash caught him in the early '90's and he lost everything. In November, 1894, he went to the Cripple Creek mining camp, where he has been most of the time since.

Richard P. R. Millar, a brother two years the senior of Will, was in the employ of the "Overland" as the clothing agent, and made an occasional trip as messenger. To those who desired it, Holladay supplied his men with a superior quality of clothing at a small advance above New York prices, and Dick Millar, as all the boys called him, was in charge of it. He made his trips in the express vehicles specially built, going from Atchison to Salt Lake, 1200 miles. He left the Salt Lake road in 1866 and was transferred the latter part of the year to the Smoky Hill route. Like his brother Will, Dick was a man whom every one in Atchison and along the overland route where he was known greatly admired. He had been in the transportation business the most of his life. He worked in railroad offices at Kansas City, Mo., Troy Junction, Kan., Humboldt, Neb., and, for the last twenty-six years of his life, had resided in Lincoln, Neb., where he had been in the employ of the Atchison & Nebraska, the Union Pacific and the Missouri Pacific railroads as general agent. He was a prominent Mason and a member of the Ancient Order of United Workmen. He was cut down in the prime of life, dying suddenly of appoplexy, while engaged at his duties, on February 14, 1900. The funeral was one of the largest ever held at Nebraska's capital. He was buried by the Knights Templar and United Workmen. The funeral services were solemn and impressive. The pastor, Doctor Rowlands, dwelt upon the necessity of preparation for death. This preparation, he said, should make one at peace with conscience, at peace with his neighbors, at peace with his interests, and at peace with his God. At the close of the discourse, Doctor Rowlands spoke as a friend of the departed. He said he had known Mr. Millar intimately and knew of his Christian character. He said his life emphasized the fact that a man could be a leader in worldly business and guard the interests of a great corporation and be honest and honorable and Christlike. He paid a touching tribute to the worth of Mr. Millar, as one whose life had made the world better.

James H. Capen was born at Gardiner, Me., January 3, 1840, and drifted out to Kansas in the spring of 1860. His first trip across the plains to Denver was from Leavenworth with one of Jones & Cartwright's ox trains, when he was forty-two days on the road. He was, for a few months, employed as messenger on the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express line in the spring and summer of 1861. His run was from St. Joseph to Denver, but he reports few incidents of special interest happening on the route during the brief period he was connected with it. He was the first messenger to arrive, about four o'clock in the morning, at Rock Creek station, in southern Nebraska, where "Wild Bill" and "Dock" Brink, two stage-drivers, had killed the notorious McCandless gang of outlaws that had some time been watching for and threatening their lives. Capen saw the whole gang lying dead on the ground, where they fell in the desperate fight that took place between the two parties, an account of which appears elsewhere in this volume. Capen had a slight misfortune one trip while coming in from Denver. His coach was upset at one of the stations and the vehicle badly disabled, in consequence of the driver, who wanted to show off his skill as one of the best reinsmen on the line, making too short a turn. This accident caused considerable delay, and before resuming his trip the messenger was obliged to return to Fort Kearney to get another coach. The driver was reported to the division agent, who promptly discharged him for his carelessness. While Capen was in the stage company's service, Amos Hodgman was also employed as messenger alternately with him over the same route. Both young men afterwards enlisted in the Seventh Kansas Volunteer Cavalry (the famous "Jayhawker" regiment), commanded by the gallant Col. C. R. Jennison. The regiment went South during the war, and Hodgman was killed in battle at Wyatt, Miss., in 1864, but Capen served until the rebellion closed and is still alive and well, residing near Topeka, Kan.

E. M. Pollinger (better known as "Guv."), originally a driver in Kansas and Nebraska, was afterwards employed by Holladay as messenger on one of his mountain branch stage lines out of Denver on the Georgetown route. In an accident near Georgetown his stage was turned over by a wind-storm. All the passengers were saved without injury, but Pollinger was not so fortunate; he was caught in the wreck, the result being a broken leg.

A few others were now and then employed, but their names do not now occur to me. It is known that at least six of the above-mentioned have gone "over the range" since they took those long, tedious rides back and forth across the plains. Mayfield,

SENECA, KAN., 1898. Main street looking east.

one of the first messengers employed, also the longest in continuous service, died at his home in St. Joseph in the later '60's. Lloyd, whose home was at Maysville, Ky., and who only made a few trips in the capacity of messenger, suicided more than a quarter of a century ago while on one of Ben. Holladay's ocean steamers on the Pacific. Thomas, formerly from Towanda, Pa., also one of the first messengers employed, and who held the offices of sheriff and treasurer of Shawnee county, and other important public positions, died at his home in Topeka, Kan., in the later '80's. He was a man greatly respected and left an estate worth over $50,000, which was a better showing than some of the others made. Addoms, who was formerly from western Missouri and one of the pioneers of Atchison, Kan., passed away in the early '90's at his home in Kansas City, at the age of more than seventy-five years. McClelland died in Colorado in the early '90's, having been proprietor of a stage line to some of the prominent mining camps in the Centennial state. West also died in the early '90's, in Montana. R. P. R. Millar died at Lincoln, Neb., in 1900. And it may be that others of the boys have since dropped off, but the whereabouts of only a few of the living is now known. Ellifrit, who resided at Weston, Mo., when a boy, is at Higginsville, Mo.; Gaylord is and has been for years in the Topeka (Kan.) insane asylum; Letson is an extensive farmer and horse-breeder at Horton, Kan.; W. L. H. Millar is in business in Cripple Creek, Colo.; Root is living at Topeka, Kan.; Spottswood is an extensive ranchman near Littleton, Colo.; Philip Rodgers resides at St. Joseph, Mo.; Pollinger is living on a ranch in Montana; and Wilson is in the grocery and commission trade, at Kansas City, Mo.

What an interesting event it would be to meet once more—after a lapse of over a third of a century—with the remaining "boys" who made so many trips across the plains on the Concord coach in the old overland staging days. What stories, reminiscences and incidents of adventure they could relate of those early, exciting times; of the hardships and privations they were so often obliged to endure; of the clouds of dust and swarms of buffalo-gnats they frequently encountered; of the all-night rides facing blinding storms and piercing blizzards; of the runs for dear life surrounded by prairie fires; of the lonesome, dreary nights spent while lost on the plains; of the long night of suspense on an Indian reservation stuck in the mud, surrounded by high water; of the trying time when stopped by a band of Indian warriors; of the frequent risks they ran of being waylaid and the coach robbed by highwaymen; and of the hairbreadth escapes from being killed and scalped by prowling savages.

But the most of those "boys" are old men now, white-haired and wrinkled, perhaps; and would needs tell the tales of adventure in less forceful language than of old. But what a volume of unwritten history those overland messengers could recite, if only they were assembled, and prompted by each others' presence to recall the incidents connected with some of their stage trips.

It used to puzzle some of the passengers going from Atchison to Denver because we met a coach going in the opposite direction every twelve hours. They could not understand, at first, how we could meet twelve stages going across the plains in six days; but after the matter was explained to them that there were six coaches already on the road when we started, and that an additional one would leave every morning, likewise that it took six days to make the trip, the matter then was easily understood by those who were not too dull of comprehension. Frequently, during the rush of overland travel in the spring of 1864, the company was obliged to run extras, in which case each driver would have to double his route.

On a trip early in the summer of 1863, owing to a slight accident, we were detained a few minutes on the South Platte at Beauvais ranch. While there the passengers and all hands were considerably amused to see two half-breed Indian boys about the premises, apparently not more than ten years of age, with bows and arrows. The lads were dressed like old-time warriors. They were very thinly clad; but what they lacked in the way of covering was made up in a plentiful supply of gorgeous war paint of several colors, daubed and striped over their faces, arms, and bodies. Their heads were trimmed with feathers and on their feet were the usual buckskin moccasins, only they were ornamented with beads.

The passengers asked them to shoot, but they shook their heads. Some of the ranchmen about the premises said they possessed much skill in marksmanship and were quite proficient in the use of their favorite weapons. The little fellows wanted to shoot for money. After we had seen them shoot, we thought they were almost equal to some of the famous Sioux and Cheyenne warriors.

It was a rather difficult matter at first to persuade the little fellows to get down to business, but our putting up a silver half-dollar or quarter at fifteen to thirty paces was just what they were after. They would draw up, offhand, and hit the little white pieces nearly every time. They shot without taking aim, and would almost invariably hit the pieces the first time, and then hastily pick them up and keep them. Their remarkable skill in archery astonished and greatly pleased the stage passengers; and it was genuine sport for the young aborigines, who were making money easily and rapidly, for every "scad" they hit was theirs.

Prairie-chickens and quails, when I first went on the overland line were numerous between the Missouri river and the Platte. They were seen every day from the stage-coach, numbering thousands. Naturally they were the most plentiful along the stage route in northern Kansas in the vicinity of the settlements and ranches, and there were a great many along the Little Blue river in southern Nebraska. They were multiplying so rapidly

A PRAIRIE-DOG TOWN ON THE PLAINS.

that it seemed that they never could be thinned out. For a long time they furnished much of the choice food for ranchmen, and the freighters and travelers shot thousands of them while on their way across the plains. A third of a century, however, has seen these birds almost completely disappear. Only now and then a few scattering ones may be seen.

There was an abundance of wild game in the '60's. In eastern Kansas large numbers of wild turkeys and a great many rabbits were seen. Along the Little Blue river there were also many wild turkeys and rabbits, and deer and antelope were also plentiful. In the Platte valley were a great many deer, antelope, and an occasional elk, while a few miles distant, south from the stream and away from the heavily traveled thoroughfare, buffaloes abounded by hundreds of thousands. A great many came north to the Platte and there slaked their thirst. Buffalo-wallows were numerous along the Platte in staging days.

Throughout the mountain region a few miles from Denver were vast numbers of sage-hens and grouse, while elk, deer, antelope, mountain sheep, bear, mountain lions and other wild animals were plentiful. Down the South Platte for 200 miles east of Denver there were occasional sage-hens near the road; but few of the stage boys ate them, because, they said, it required a cast-iron stomach to digest them. Occasionally we ran across a pack of gray wolves on the plains, but usually they were scarce. The native prairie wolves—the coyote—were quite numerous, and many of them could at times be seen from the stage-coach. A pelican was now and then seen along the South Platte, in the vicinity of old Julesburg, but out of reach of the ordinary rifle of those early days. All of the mountain streams were full of trout, familiarly known as "speckled beauties," and the disciples of Izaak Walton could have as much sport angling for them as the most expert Nimrod ever got in the chase.

It was a rare occurrence for a passenger, at an eating station on the overland stage route, to ask for a cup of tea. For each pound of tea used along the line it is probably no exaggeration to say that there was consumed in the neighborhood of a ton of coffee. And it was most always good coffee, too—some of it perfectly delicious; but once in a while we would strike a place where the stuff poured out and drank under the name of coffee was a decoction of something simply abominable. We always had plenty of the very best sugar, but seldom got cream for our coffee along the Platte. Those who preferred it, instead of drinking their coffee clear, could sometimes get the condensed lacteal fluid, that being almost the only kind used for the 400 miles between Fort Kearney and the mountains.

The altitude of Atchison is about 750 feet above the sea. Between there and Fort Kearney a great portion of the road, except for a distance of about fifty miles along the Little Blue river, was over rolling prairie, some portions of it furnishing the most lovely landscapes to be found in northern Kansas or southern Nebraska. From Fort Kearney west for 400 miles, to Denver, the road followed along the south side, or right bank, of the Platte river. Notwithstanding the fact that the road along this river appeared to be a water grade, and the rise hardly perceptible while passing over it on the stage-coach, yet, upon arriving at the Colorado metropolis, it was discovered that we had gradually climbed to an altitude of 5150 feet, or more than nine-tenths of a mile above the level of the sea.

While making my first trip to Denver, I must own up that I was somewhat frightened the second night out from Atchison. I did not know, when I first started out, that it was the custom of the drivers, when approaching a station at night, to most always send up a terrible yell. This was done to awaken the stock tender, so he might have the team harnessed, and also that the driver might be ready who was to succeed the incoming one on the next drive. We were going up the Little Blue valley. While asleep down in the front boot, under the driver's feet, I was suddenly awakened by what seemed to me one of the most unearthly yells I had ever heard from any human being. It appeared like the horrible yell of an Indian on the war-path. I felt quite sure that the savages were after somebody's scalp, but said nothing to the driver, a stranger. Soon I was agreeably disappointed when I discovered that I had only heard the yell of the driver. What he was making such a terrible yelling for was to me a puzzle at the time. I soon learned, however; and before I had made many trips could imitate the yell and make a screech as horrible sounding as any driver. The spelling and pronouncing of the yell might be something like "Ah-whooh-wah," but only those who have heard it from one of the "Overland" boys can have the remotest idea of the shrill and hideous-sounding noise. There was another yell that some of the drivers, not being possessed of the soundest lungs, used. It was "Yep, yep, yep," but there was nothing specially hideous about it.

At one of the stations between 500 and 600 miles west of the Missouri, one of the drivers was lying on his bunk, trying to take a snooze. One of his companion drivers desired him to come out and help fix something about the coach that required hard work. He was asked politely two or three times and just as often failed to respond. Finally the anxious driver asked him again to come—telling him that lying on the bunk was not conducive to health, and that he needed some exercise. That remark seemed to provoke a broad smile from the snoozing driver, who forthwith followed, with the remark that he could "get all the exercise he wanted trying to masticate the tough beefsteaks furnished by Ben. Holladay."

During my various trips by stage across the plains before any railroads were in operation in Kansas and Nebraska, I traveled almost far enough to make a journey around the globe. I used to enjoy some of the trips very much, although at times it was terribly fatiguing and the ride sometimes anything but pleasant. Notwithstanding my place was on the box with the driver, and that is where the messengers all were supposed to ride day and night, still, whenever an opportunity offered, I would crawl down into the boot, under the driver's feet, double myself up, and, covered with the front apron of leather, snooze away as comfortably as if lying on "flowery beds of ease." At first I thought I could never do it, but hundreds of miles have I ridden while asleep, sitting up on the box alongside the driver, both day and night; for it appeared out of the question for any ordinary human being to go six days and nights without sleep. After making a few trips and getting used to the business, it finally made little difference to me when, where or how I slept. I could go to sleep in a chair, snooze away on the "soft side of a plank," or lie comfortably on the ground with my head resting on a stone. Sleep I must have, and while on the plains I never failed to take it when I had a chance, no matter what the surroundings might be.

A rather amusing and somewhat ludicrous scene occurred in the summer of 1864 at Cottonwood Springs. There had been some fresh Indian troubles along the Platte between Cottonwood and Fort Kearney, and the division agent had prudently exercised his prerogative by holding for two or three days all the stages at the former place until the road was deemed safe to travel. While the agent was getting the first east-bound coach in readiness for its departure, he stated that the through passengers would have precedence over those from Denver.

It happened that there was a woman from Denver, and she weighed nearly 200 pounds. She was "chief engineer of a millinery shop and ran a sewing-machine." After listening attentively to the agent's remarks, and when the coach was about ready to depart—the passengers discussing among themselves who would and who would not go on the first coach—she opened with her

A CHICKEN ROOST. *Page 91.*

"chin music," as follows: "Here are passengers from California, Nevada, Salt Lake, Idaho, and Montana. I suppose Denver is nowhere; but I'll play that I take the back seat"; and into the coach she climbed—and she "held the fort." She had paid full fare, had arrived at the Springs from Denver on the first coach, and, being armed with a revolver, dared them to detain her.

At one of the stations in the Little Blue valley, in southern Nebraska, where we stopped one night for supper, in the latter part of February, 1863, the men about the premises had been butchering their hogs that afternoon. Soon after supper I was invited by one of the stage boys into the back room to see the sight where the hogs that had been killed and split open were on the floor, lying on their backs.

I was not a little surprised, and at the same time amused, to find a half-dozen or more hens quietly roosting on the sides of the mammoth "porkers." Whether there were other hens about the premises roosting on the meal barrel I did not take the time to determine, presuming that the good-natured ranchman, who was proprietor of the station, had obeyed the injunction of the traditional Hoosier farmer, who, the last thing before going to bed, invariably gave explicit orders to have the "backs of all the chickens turned to the wall."

Now and then some rather strange things occurred on the "Overland." It was imperative that the stage-coach axles be greased (or rather "doped," as the boys used to call it) at every "home" station, and these were from twenty-five to fifty miles apart. This duty had time and again been impressed upon the drivers by the division agents, but occasionally one of them would forget the important work. As a natural consequence the result would be a "hot box."

One afternoon early in the summer of 1863, while we were on the rolling prairies near the Little Blue river, one of the front wheels of the stage was suddenly clogged and would not turn. On examination, it was found to be sizzling hot. The stage had to stop and wait until the axle cooled off. As soon as practicable, the driver took off the wheel and made an inspection, the passengers and messenger holding up the axle. On further examination, it was found that the spindle had begun to "cut," and there was no alternative but to "dope" it before we could go any farther. But we were stumped; there was no "dope" on the stage.

The driver, an old-timer at staging, suggested, since "necessity is the mother of invention," that as a last resort he would bind a few blades of grass around the spindle, which he was certain would run us part way to the station, and we could stop and repeat the experiment. But one of the passengers chanced to have a piece of cheese in his grip sack, and a little of it was sliced off and applied; and it worked admirably, and was sufficient to run the coach safely to the next station, where the difficulty was quickly remedied by application of the proper "dope."

An incident somewhat exciting, and at the same time not a little amusing, occurred on one of my trips, at Midway station, on the Platte, in the fall of 1863. It was at a rather late hour of the night, and the stock tender, who had been imbibing pretty freely of "forty-rod" whisky, went into the stable and staggered into one of the stalls where a span of mules were standing. Quicker than you could say "Jack Robinson," the long-eared animals with their heels lifted him bodily from the ground, and he landed against the heels of a span of the same kind of animals in a stall on the opposite side of the stable. Before the poor fellow hardly had time to realize his situation, he was once more lifted by the mules, landing against the heels of the first span. They instantly kicked him again, but this time he was landed on the ground in the center of the stable. One of the drivers was in the barn at the time and witnessed the lively and extraordinary feat in kicking. He expected to find the life kicked out of the stock tender—his form reduced to a mass of pulp; but, strange to say, the fellow was unhurt, being too "full" to be injured by a pommeling that would doubtless have killed a sober man.

Occasionally changes were made in the location of the overland route. Early in July, 1862, permission was given to the contractor by the Postmaster-general to change the mail route so as to leave the road then traveled (which crossed the South Platte, as stated, at old Julesburg), and keep along the south side of that stream for about 140 miles westward; thence fording the river and diverging in a northwesterly course, following the "Cherokee trail," *via* Bridger's Pass, and intersecting the original mail route at Fort Bridger. While this proposed change did not save anything in distance, it was claimed that it was a better route and comparatively free from Indians, while the savages along the Lodge Pole route had from time to time been committing numerous depredations on the property of the stage company. The change to the proposed new route was not made, however, until the fall of 1863, when the place of crossing the South Platte was fixed near the Cherokee City post-office, where Latham station was established, near the mouth of the Cache la Poudre. The latter stream empties into the South Platte about sixty miles below Denver, and nearly due east of Long's Peak, some thirty-odd miles from the base of the Rockies, where the clear stream, a raging torrent, gushes from the foot-hills at Laporte.

In October, 1864, after the serious troubles on the "Overland," another important change was made in the stage route. The South Platte, which had been forded from Latham station for about a year, was abandoned. By the new change the main line passed through Denver, thus doing away with the branch line of sixty miles between Denver and Latham. The new road left the South Platte at Bijou station (the Junction House) and, instead of making a crescent, its course to Denver over the toll-road cut-off was practically an air-line of about ninety miles.

At Denver the stages to and from California still crossed the South Platte, but they crossed it on a bridge. From there the new route towards Salt Lake followed the east slope of the mountains for sixty-five miles, and intersected the old stage road at Laporte, only thirty-five miles from the abandoned Latham. Changing from Latham station and running the stages over the cut-off necessitated no less than thirty miles' extra staging on the main line; but the inducements held out by Denver, and the fact that there was no more fording the South Platte, also that it saved the expense of a sixty-mile branch line between Denver and Latham and the employment of an agent at the latter station, were some of the main reasons for making this important change.

General Hughes, in September, 1865, partially built a mountain wagon road from Salt Lake City *via* Green River to Middle Park, on which a large sum of money was expended. The route was not only a perfectly feasible one for a stage line, but it was chosen so that it could be adopted, if necessary, for use by the first railroad to be built across the Rocky Mountains.

Among the forty-nine stations between Atchison and Denver on the old stage line there were five on the first division, between Atchison and Fort Kearney, named for as many different Indian tribes—Kickapoo, Seneca, Otoe, Pawnee, and Kiowa; while

Kennekuk and Oketo were also aboriginal names. All of them were seemingly pretty names, and the first five represented not powerful but very peaceable tribes. Quite a number of the names of stations were duplicated. For instance, there were two bearing the name of Cold Springs, two named Diamond Springs, two Lone Tree, two Sulphur Springs, and two Willow Springs.

Between Fort Kearney and Denver, there was only one station christened for the "noble red man." It was located on the cut-off toll road east of Denver, and was also named Kiowa. Between Denver and Salt Lake there was a station named Cherokee. In 1863 there was a post-office near the right bank of the South Platte, about 600 miles west of the Missouri river, near the mouth of the Cache la Poudre, named Cherokee City. The "city" bearing this name contained one house, and it was the stage station.

Cottonwood Springs was named for some springs in the immediate vicinity of which were quite a number of cottonwood trees. In the early days of overland traffic on the plains the trees were cut down by freighters and converted into fire-wood. Since then nearly all of the fuel used by the stage line for over 200 miles along the Platte was cedar, cut in the cañons near Cottonwood Springs and hauled the entire distance, mostly by oxen. Just think of it! hauling fire-wood to old Julesburg, about 105 miles west. We have mentioned before that all of the stage stations and some of the ranch buildings for a long distance east and west of Cottonwood Springs were built of cedar logs transported by ox teams from the ground on which they grew.

There were about twenty-five regular eating stations on the line between Atchison and Denver. The most of them were so provided with conveniences that they could get up a good meal on the shortest notice—better than might have been expected so far out on the plains, hundreds of miles away from a market and from many of the advantages found in an agricultural region. The station keepers went more on furnishing passengers the substantials than they did the light, dainty delicacies. Being jostled from one side of the coach to the other while going over a rough road was sufficient exercise to give almost any person an appetite for a solid, "square" meal, "just like the ones your mother used to get up."

Fried bacon and ham were a regular standby at most of the stations on the upper Little Blue and Platte; still there were furnished an ample supply of buffalo, elk and antelope steaks in their season, for a distance of at least 300 miles. Along the lower Little Blue, down through southern Nebraska and northern Kansas—the finest agricultural section on the entire line—eggs and chickens, nice cream for the coffee, with fresh butter and plenty of vegetables, were a prominent feature of the every-day diet. Way up toward the head waters of the Little Blue, at Liberty Farm, we frequently had the pleasure of dining on wild turkey, and it was always roasted in the finest style.

DETAINED BY A "HOT BOX." *Page 91.*

Occasionally there would be a passenger who, before starting out from Atchison west, would fill his pockets and grip with crackers and cheese, dried beef, herring, or "Bologna," and make the long trip of six days and nights to Denver without eating a meal at a station. This was a rather difficult feat to perform, but now and then one would be found, even worth his thousands, who would do it; his "grub" for the entire trip amounting to but little more than the price of a single meal at a station. No meal was furnished passengers on the east end of the line for less than fifty cents; between Fort Kearney and Julesburg they were seventy-five cents; and from the latter station to Denver one dollar was the uniform price in 1863. As a usual thing, the messengers were not charged for their meals, they having to do often a dozen or more errands each trip for the station keepers or their wives at Atchison and Denver.

There were a few stations, however, that came under another class, and they were more than even a driver who had spent the greater part of his life on the box could stand. Some of them were indescribably filthy, for even an overland station far out on the frontier. No one ever dreamed that all the necessaries and comforts of life could be obtained at an overland eating place. At one station over 500 miles out on the plains things were perhaps not quite as neat as they might have been, or as they were at some other places. One passenger, who evidently had not "roughed it" much on the plains, sat down at the table with a half-dozen others, and at once commenced making some discreditable remarks about the food, complaining that there was a good deal of dirt, etc. The landlord, who at the time happened to be standing behind him, at once spoke up:

"Well, sir, I was taught long ago that we must all eat a 'peck of dirt.'"

"I am aware of that fact, my dear sir," hastily responded the passenger, "but I don't like to eat mine all at once."

At another station it was observed that one of the drivers frequently played sick; he could n't eat, he said, because of his weak stomach. He had for a long time been hanging about the house, and had watched the landlady fondling the dogs and cats, and shortly afterwards, without washing, thrusting her hands into the flour and mixing up the pan of biscuit. This driver with a delicate, weak stomach would go hungry and wait until he reached the next station rather than attempt to eat after he had watched the process of cooking. Those who knew nothing about the dogs and cats declared that "Mrs. —— could beat any woman on the overland line making nice biscuit."

Along the Platte west of Fort Kearney, for a considerable distance, we for weeks had nothing in the pastry line except dried-apple pie. This article of diet for dessert became so plentiful that not only the drivers and stock tenders rebelled, but the passengers also joined in, some of them "kicking" like Government mules. As a few of the drivers expressed it, it was "dried-apple pie from Genesis to Revelations." Finally the following gem, which very soon had the desired effect, was copied and sent on its way east and west up and down the Platte:

DRIED-APPLE PIES.

I loathe! abhor! detest! despise!
Abominate dried-apple pies;
I like good bread; I like good meat,
Or anything that 's good to eat;
But of all poor grub beneath the skies
The poorest is dried-apple pies.
Give me a toothache or sore eyes
In preference to such kind of pies.

The farmer takes his gnarliest fruit,
'T is wormy, bitter, and hard, to boot;
They leave the hulls to make us cough,
And do n't take half the peelings off;
Then on a dirty cord they 're strung,
And from some chamber window hung;
And there they serve a roost for flies
Until they 're ready to make pies.
Tread on my corns, or tell me lies,
But *do n't* pass to *me* dried-apple pies.

A great many of the stock tenders out on the frontier who lived between "home" stations kept "bachelor's hall" and lived by themselves. At one of the stations on the eastern slope of the Rockies northwest of Latham was one; and at the hour for dinner one day in the summer of 1864 a weary pilgrim from the East, making his way overland, chanced to stop for a drink of water and to rest. He was invited by the host to dine. "I do n't care if I do," quickly responded the anxious footman, and he took a seat at the table. The host cut off a slice of fat pork and the guest was asked to pass his plate. "Thank you," said he "but I never eat it." "Very well," said the host; "just help yourself to the mustard"; and the host proceeded with his meal. It happened that fat pork and mustard comprised the entire list of edible articles then in the stock tender's house; and he offered his guest the best he had. For a long time it was a regular standing joke of the stage boys along the line, when any one refused anything at the table, to say, "Help yourself to the mustard."

As the years rolled by the time was shortened on the great

MARYSVILLE, KAN., 1876. BIRD'S-EYE VIEW.

stage line. The schedule from Atchison to Salt Lake, which had been eleven days and a few hours, was in the summer of 1865 reduced to ten days and two hours. To Denver the schedule time was reduced from six to five days, or an average of nearly six and a half miles an hour.

The era of overland staging between the Missouri river and the Pacific lasted about eight years. The great enterprise began as a semiweekly line in the fall of 1858, and was in operation on what was known as the southern or Butterfield route. Coaches started from St. Louis, Mo., and Memphis, Tenn., intersecting at Fort Smith, in Arkansas. After being in operation for nearly three years, this was succeeded by a daily line on the central route, which ran from the Missouri river five years, first starting from St. Joseph, Mo., July 1, 1861, and lastly from Atchison, Kan., in September following.

On the central route, the through staging finally came to a close after the completion of the Union Pacific railroad from

Omaha west across the continent. For two years before the road was finished, the Concords ran from the terminus of the railroad, it being necessary every few weeks to move the starting stations ahead from 50 to 100 miles on account of the rapid track-laying.

Originally the stage enterprise for nearly three years was known as the Overland Mail Company — the southern or Butterfield line. Next, after it was transferred north and ran in connection with the stages to Denver, which line it absorbed, it was known as the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company. Later, after passing into the hands of Ben. Holladay, it became the "Overland Stage Line"; and during the last two years, while it was operated by the latter, the name was changed to the Holladay Overland Mail and Express Company. It should be noted, however, that in 1866 the line had been consolidated with the Butterfield Overland Despatch, a stage company organized in 1865, with headquarters at Atchison, and later in operation from the western terminus of the Kansas Pacific railway to Denver, over the Smoky Hill route.

When the Union Pacific road was finished to North Platte, 300 miles west of Omaha, a portion of the stage stock on the eastern division between Fort Kearney and Rock Creek, and that between Omaha and Fort Kearney and Fort Kearney and North Platte, was pulled off. On the stage road west of North Platte the stock had to be "doubled up." The stage business had grown immensely, and the company was obliged to run a tri-daily line of coaches to carry the rapidly increasing travel. In addition, it was necessary to run an express wagon every other day.

Those connected with the early management of the great stage line before it passed into the hands of Holladay had a hard task to perform. The hostility of the Indians in the early '60's, the difficulty in obtaining supplies on a route so remote from civilization, and the numerous perils incident to floods, snows, tornadoes, etc., rendered the "Overland" one of the great enterprises of the century. A man of less courage, energy and capacity than Gen. Bela M. Hughes would have signally failed. To add to the annoyances in operating the line, scattered here and there over the plains and in the mountains were small bands of desperadoes from Texas, Arkansas, and other parts of the West, ostensibly hunting buffalo and other animals for their hides; but really it was plain that their object was to steal stock, rob the express coaches and passengers, and at times murder was resorted to in carrying out their hellish designs.

On the eastern division, in 1866, the overland stages were protected by a military escort west from Big Sandy, in Jefferson county, Nebraska. There was a mounted patrol accompanying each stage west-bound and inbound, and at each station there was a corporal or other non-commissioned officer and from six to ten privates who went along as a mounted escort to the next station west, who were there relieved by a similar escort which continued on to the next station, and on through. On their return they had these same escorts; thus, where military protection was given, there was seldom any trouble from Indians with any of the stages on the line.

About the time of the completion of the Union Pacific road from Omaha, another great transcontinental line of railway was begun—the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fé (the "Santa Fé" for short), now one of the greatest lines of road on the face of the globe. Ground was first broken on this line at a railroad celebration in Atchison on the 13th of June, 1860, but on account of the civil war no active work was begun at the initial point until 1869. The road was then pushed rapidly to the Southwest, diagonally across the state of Kansas, up the Arkansas valley into southeastern Colorado, then into the heart of New Mexico.

Almost immediately after it was begun a vast immigration set in, and this necessitated the organization of important new stage lines, not only in southwest Kansas, Colorado, and New Mexico, but on through Arizona and beyond to the Pacific.

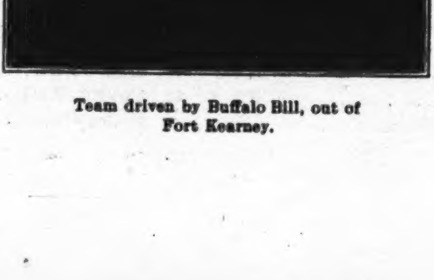
For ten to twenty years following the building of the Union Pacific and the Santa Fé roads there was a great amount of staging done in the Rockies. All over the West, Northwest, and Southwest, from points on these two important railways, lines were started to scores of new and rapidly growing mining camps which were from time to time being developed all through the mountain regions. The most of these new stage lines were short ones. Some of them, however, were hundreds of miles in length and grew to be important stage, express and mail routes.

One line which soon grew into prominence ran through to California from the western terminus of the great Santa Fé road, then rapidly building through New Mexico and Arizona. But during the era of unprecedented railway construction throughout the great West, in the later '70's and '80's—during which time thousands of miles of new road were built—the staging business in the mountains and west of them to the Pacific coast was, in a great measure, paralyzed.

In the early '80's there was some lively staging done in Colorado by Barlow & Sanderson's overland line, before the Denver & Rio Grande and the Denver, South Park & Pacific roads had crossed the summit of the Rockies. Previous to the building of these two roads, this well-known firm ran a first-class mountain stage line, equipped with Concord coaches, which covered a goodly portion of southern Colorado and northern New Mexico.

In the summer of 1880, following the San Juan mining excitement and the wonderful silver discoveries in the Gunnison region, when the eyes of the country were turned toward that then new El Dorado, J. L. Sanderson & Co. ran a four- and six-horse line of Concord stages on the Otto Mears toll road over Marshall Pass, crossing the back-bone of the continent at an elevation of over 10,750 feet, and another line across Alpine Pass, 12,500 feet above sea-level.

It was over Marshall Pass, on the Otto Mears toll road, that General Grant and his son, Col. Fred. D. Grant, rode into Gunnison City in the summer of 1880, from which place they made a hurried trip by private conveyance into the Elk Mountain mining region, on a tour of recreation and also to inspect the wonders in silver mining then being uncovered near Irwin and Crested Butte, in Ruby Camp, about 10,500 feet above tide.



Team driven by Buffalo Bill, out of Fort Kearney.

TABLE OF DISTANCES BETWEEN ATCHISON, KAN., AND PLACERVILLE, CAL.

Between stations.	NAMES OF STATIONS.	From Atchison.	Between stations.	NAMES OF STATIONS.	From Atchison.
------	ATCHISON..........Kan.	------	20	Bijou..............Colo.	553
10	Lancaster.......... "	10	16	Fremont's Orchard, "	569
14	Kennekuk.......... "	24	11	Eagle's Nest....... "	580
12	Kickapoo.......... "	36	12	Latham............ "	592
13	Log Chain.......... "	49	15	Big Bend........... "	607
11	Seneca............ "	60	17	Fort Lupton....... "	624
12	Laramie Creek..... "	72	15	Pierson's........... "	639
12	Guittard's......... "	84	14	DENVER........... "	653
10	Oketo.............. "	94	11	Child's............ "	664
11	Otoe...............Neb.	105	12	Boon's............. "	676
11	Pawnee............ "	116	18	Little Thompson... "	694
14	Grayson's.......... "	130	8	Big Thompson...... "	702
10	Big Sandy.......... "	140	16	Laporte............ "	718
14	Thompson's........ "	154	10	Boner.............. "	728
14	Kiowa.............. "	168	12	Cherokee.......... "	740
12	Little Blue......... "	180	12	Virginia Dale....... "	752
13	Liberty Farm...... "	193	15	Willow Springs....Wyo.	767
15	Lone Tree.......... "	208	15	Big Laramie........ "	782
10	32-Mile Creek...... "	218	14	Little Laramie...... "	796
12	Summit............ "	230	17	Cooper Creek....... "	813
13	Hook's............. "	243	11	Rock Creek........ "	824
10	Fort Kearney....... "	253	17	Medicine Bow...... "	841
10	Platte Station...... "	263	8	Elk Mountain...... "	849
11	Craig.............. "	274	14	Pass Creek......... "	863
15	Plum Creek........ "	289	16	North Platte....... "	889
15	Willow Island...... "	304	14	Sage Creek......... "	903
14	Midway............ "	318	10	Pine Grove......... "	913
15	Gilman's........... "	333	9	Bridger's Pass...... "	922
17	Cottonwood Springs "	350	10	Sulphur Springs.... "	932
15	Cold Springs....... "	365	11	Waskie............. "	943
14	Fremont Springs... "	379	13	Duck Lake......... "	956
11	Elkhorn............ "	390	12	Dug Springs....... "	968
14	Alkali Lake........ "	404	15	Laclede............ "	983
12	Sand Hill.......... "	416	12	Big Pond.......... "	995
11	Diamond Springs... "	427	14	Black Buttes....... "	1009
15	South Platte....... "	442	14	Rock Point......... "	1023
14	Julesburg..........Colo.	456	14	Salt Wells.......... "	1037
12	Antelope........... "	468	14	Rock Spring........ "	1051
13	Spring Hill......... "	481	15	Green River........ "	1066
13	Dennison's......... "	494	14	Lone Tree.......... "	1080
12	Valley Station...... "	506	18	Ham's Fork........ "	1098
15	Kelly's............. "	521	12	Church Buttes..... "	1110
12	Beaver Creek....... "	533	8	Millersville......... "	1118

TABLE OF DISTANCES BETWEEN ATCHISON, KAN.. AND PLACERVILLE, CAL.—*concluded.*

Between stations.	NAMES OF STATIONS.		From Atchison.
13	Fort Bridger	Wyo.	1131
12	Muddy	"	1143
10	Quaking Asp Spr'gs	"	1153
10	Bear River	"	1163
10	Needle Rock	Utah	1173
10	Echo Cañon	"	1183
10	Hanging Rock	"	1193
10	Weber	"	1203
12	Daniel's	"	1215
11	Kimball's	"	1226
15	Mountain Dell	"	1241
14	GREAT SALT LAKE CITY,	"	1255
9	Travellers' Rest	"	1264
11	Rockwell's	"	1275
9	Joe Dug Out	"	1284
10	Fort Crittenden	"	1294
10	No Name	"	1304
10	Rush Valley	"	1314
11	Point Lookout	"	1325
15	Simpson's Springs	"	1340
8	River Bed	"	1348
10	Dug Way	"	1358
12	Black Rock	"	1370
11	Fish Springs	"	1381
10	Boyd's	"	1391
10	Willow Springs	"	1401
15	Cañon Station	"	1416
12	Deep Creek	"	1428
8	Prairie Gate	Nev.	1436
18	Antelope Springs	"	1454
13	Spring Valley	"	1467
12	Schell Creek	"	1479
12	Gold Cañon	"	1491
15	Butte	"	1506
11	Mountain Spring	Nev.	1517
9	Ruby Valley	"	1526
12	Jacob's Wells	"	1538
12	Diamond Springs	"	1550
12	Sulphur Springs	"	1562
13	Robert's Creek	"	1575
13	Camp Station	"	1588
15	Dry Creek	"	1603
10	Cape Horn	"	1613
11	Simpson's Park	"	1624
15	Reese River	"	1639
12	Mount Airey	"	1651
14	Castle Rock	"	1665
12	Edward's Creek	"	1677
11	Cold Spring	"	1688
10	Middle Gate	"	1698
15	Fair View	"	1713
13	Mountain Well	"	1726
15	Still Water	"	1741
14	Old River	"	1755
14	Bisby's	"	1769
11	Nevada	"	1780
12	Desert Wells	"	1792
13	Dayton	"	1805
13	Carson	"	1818
14	Genoa	"	1832
11	Friday's	"	1843
10	Yank's	Cal.	1853
12	Strawberry	"	1865
12	Webster's	"	1877
12	Moss	"	1889
12	Sportsman's Hall	"	1901
12	PLACERVILLE	"	1913

PONY EXPRESS *EN ROUTE* ACROSS THE PLAINS.

CHAPTER V.

THE OVERLAND PONY EXPRESS.

FROM events that have from time to time taken place, it seems almost certain that there is no longer anything "new under the sun." It is learned from ancient history that old Genghis Khan, of Tartary and China, originated the pony express many centuries ago. Through Marco Polo, we are informed that he had stations every twenty-five miles, and that a distance of 300 miles a day was now and then covered by his riders. The same system, considerably less than a century ago, was said to have been in use through portions of Europe, and, for aught we know, it may now be—doubtless is—still in use in parts of that continent. There is little doubt, however, that it was used in Europe many years before it was even dreamed of in the western world.*

A period of over forty years has elapsed since the conception of the enterprise known as the California pony express, in the latter part of 1859. Few frontier enterprises can in any way be compared with it, looking at it in the light of a matter of public importance. No similar undertaking of such magnitude had ever been attempted in America. The great enterprise was so quietly and systematically worked up that, in a little over four

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*The first newspaper pony express was originated by David Hale, a noted New York journalist, about three-quarters of a century ago, but its operations were largely confined to the collection of state news. It was not long afterwards, however, until Hale's idea was adopted and, in many respects, much improved upon. In 1830 Richard Haughton, who had already achieved a reputation as editor of the political and election news of the New York *Journal of Commerce*, and was subsequently the founder of the Boston *Atlas*, utilized pony expresses to good purpose. By a system he had established, he was enabled, by using horses and the few railroads then operated in Massachusetts, to print the election returns from every town in the state by nine o'clock the morning following the election. Hale's original express was afterwards much improved and enlarged upon by James Watson Webb, so long at the head of the *Courier and Enquirer*, one of the great New York dailies at that time. Webb was also credited with establishing, as early as 1832, a pony express between New York and Washington, which for the time was a great prestige for his paper. The result was that in 1833 Hale and Hallock started a rival line, greatly improved over the original, and thus were enabled to publish news from the national capital only two days old. For the *Journal of Commerce* this was a great triumph in journalism. So admirably did the enterprise work that papers published in Norfolk, 229 miles southeast of the capital, copied the Washington news from the *Journal of Commerce*, received by sea, in advance of its reception by the direct route down the Potomac river. The original line was forced to succumb. It was so far behind the *Journal* in getting the news that it sold out its line to the Government.

months after the subject was first whispered, the entire line was fully equipped and in successful operation.

A half-dozen or more of trusted men were engaged by its wide-awake projector. Ben. Ficklin, Jim Bromley, A. B. Miller, John Scudder—all Western frontiersmen—a man by the name of Clute, and, lastly, the afterwards notorious Jack Slade (who was hung by vigilantes at Virginia City, Mont., for a number of crimes, including murder and defying the laws), were, almost from the first, in some way identified with the important project. All of these persons were capable and efficient stage men. They were possessed of nerve, energy, enterprise, and determination. It was characteristic that the most of them had spent much time between the Missouri river and the great ocean on the West. Their invaluable services were engaged, and each, having a certain duty to perform, assisted very materially in the preliminary plans that soon thereafter resulted in the organization and putting in shape of the gigantic scheme which preceded the daily four-horse Concord overland stage-coach, and opened the way for the telegraph, and, finally, for the first railroad across the continent to the Golden Gate.

The "power behind the throne" was the well-known Western overland freighting man of that day, William H. Russell, then one of the leading citizens of Leavenworth, Kan. Leavenworth was the great Missouri river metropolis in Kansas in the later '50's and early '60's. In the "pony" enterprise, while Russell was the leading man, he was greatly assisted by his former partners in the freighting business, Messrs. Majors and Waddell. Col. Alex. Majors was an important personage and member of the firm, and, for many years, was the only one left of this remarkable trio. He passed his fourscore mile-post several years ago, and, up to almost the close of 1899, just before he died, was still quite vigorous for one of his advanced age.

At the beginning of this undertaking Russell is said to have furnished the money and paid most of the bills, and, without his encouragement and financial aid, the enterprise might never have been started. When he had fully decided to carry out his pet project, Mr. Russell first bought at Salt Lake, through his agent there, some 200 ponies, besides large numbers in California, Iowa, and Missouri. Horse-flesh in the early '60's—the kind needed for this enterprise—cost a good deal of money, and for many of the animals bought as high as $200 each was paid. But Russell all this time was shrewd enough to keep his own counsel. No one not directly interested dreamed of the vast enterprise he was quietly organizing. Every move concerning the working up of the undertaking was made with the utmost secrecy. One of his most important duties was to secure a sufficient number of young men for the hazardous task of express riders.

When the various plans had been sufficiently matured and nearly everything was in readiness, the noted pioneer Kansan had an advertisement inserted in the New York *Herald*—the great "thunderer" of the western hemisphere—and the public was, for the first time, informed that preparations were about completed for delivering dispatches from any city in the Union in San Francisco in eight days. In the East this remarkable announcement appeared in the *Herald* of March 26, 1860, and in the West in the *Missouri Republican*, and was as follows:

TO SAN FRANCISCO IN EIGHT DAYS,
—BY—
THE CENTRAL OVERLAND CALIFORNIA
—AND—
PIKE'S PEAK EXPRESS CO.
—:O:—

The first courier of the Pony Express will leave the Missouri River on Tuesday, April 3, at 5 o'clock p. m. and will run regularly weekly thereafter, carrying a letter mail only. The point of departure on the Missouri River, will be in telegraphic connection with the East and will be announced in due time.

Telegraphic messages from all parts of the United States and Canada in connection with the point of departure will be received up to 5 o'clock p. m. of the day of leaving, and transmitted over the Placerville and St. Joseph telegraph wire to San Francisco and intermediate points, by the connecting express in eight days.

The letter mail will be delivered in San Francisco in ten days from the departure of the express. The Express passes through Forts Kearney, Laramie, and Bridger, Great Salt Lake City, Camp Floyd, Carson City, the Washoe Silver Mines, Placerville, and Sacramento.

Letters for Oregon, Washington Territory, British Columbia, the Pacific Mexican ports, Russian Possessions, Sandwich Islands, China, Japan and India, will be mailed in San Francisco.

Special messengers, bearers of letters to connect with the Express of the 3d of April, will receive communications for the courier of that day at No. 481 Tenth street, Washington City, up to 2:45 p. m. on Friday, March 30, and in New York at the office of J. B. Simpson, Room No. 8, Continental Bank Building, Nassau street, up to 6:30 a. m. of March 31.

Full particulars can be obtained on application at the above place and agents of the company. W. H. RUSSELL, President.

Leavenworth City, Kansas, March, 1860.
Office in New York, J. B. Simpson, Vice President.
Samuel & Allen, Agents, St. Louis.
H. J. Spaulding, Agent, Chicago.

Most of the animals bought for the pony enterprise were distributed along the route at intervals of nine to fifteen miles, technically termed "stages," according to the nature of the country. Each rider was supposed to ride three animals in succession, traversing three "stages," and to go at least thirty-three and one-third miles. At times it would be necessary for a rider to cover four or five "stages," changing animals, however, at each. The riders were a hardy set of young men, many of them used to "roughing it" on the plains, and were all capable of standing the exposures and fatigues incident to such a trying occupation. They were selected particularly, also, on account of their light weight. Few, if any, of the chosen ones weighed over 135 pounds. The saddle, bridle and leather pouch used for the purpose were strong and durable, so constructed that the combined weight of the three was only thirteen pounds—considered a light weight for such articles forty years ago.

St. Joseph, one of the largest towns on the Missouri river west of St. Louis, was chosen as the point of departure for the pony express. The start proper of the pony was from the original "Pike's Peak" stables, built south of Patee park. In the vicinity of the stable and the Patee House a large crowd of people had gathered to watch the first rider on his fleet animal. The office of the express company was on the north side of Second street, and the signal for starting was the firing of a cannon; and while the sound was echoing through the town and along the river banks the rider was speeding up the street on his way to the office. On reaching the office, the pouch containing the letters and documents was put in the rider's charge; without a moment's delay, he rode onto the ferry-boat, the captain of which anticipated his arrival and was waiting for him at the levee.

NOTE.—In the Leavenworth (Kan.) *Times* of May 28, 1861, after the pony express had been in operation a little more than a year, appeared the following advertisment:

> **CALIFORNIA PONY EXPRESS.**
>
> The courier of the "Pony Express" leaves St. Joseph every Wednesday and Saturday, at 11 p. m., after the arrival of the Eastern Mail Express, taking letters to all points in
> *California*, *Salt Lake*, and *Carson Valley*.
>
> Letters for Oregon and Washington are forwarded by U. S. Mail from San Francisco.
>
> JOHN W. RUSSELL, Sec'y.
>
> Leavenworth Office, Shawnee Street, between Main and Second.
>
> May 28, 1861.

When the boat steamed across to the Kansas shore, the departure westward of the first pony, mounted by Johnnie Frey, marked an eventful day in the history of St. Joseph, and then began the rapid development of that part of the great West. The jet-black horse with his lithe rider which left the northwestern Missouri metropolis and crossed the "Big Muddy" a little after sunset of that 3d day of April, 1860, was watched by one of the largest crowds of anxious spectators that had ever assembled on the banks of that mighty river.

The approaching event had for some time been anticipated, and a portion of the city was in gay holiday attire; flags floated in the breeze; the brass band discoursed appropriate music; and the crowd of men, women and children that had gathered on the levee must have numbered several thousands. The occasion was a proud day for St. Joseph—an epoch that marked the inauguration of a new enterprise that did much to hurry forward the construction of the Pacific telegraph line, and to make way for the road of steel that in 1869 had crossed the mighty mountain ranges of the West and united the Atlantic coast with the Pacific.

The schedule time for delivering dispatches in San Francisco that first trip was eight days; for letters, ten days; and the remarkably quick time beat all previous records of the Southern Overland Mail Company by nearly two weeks.

At Sacramento the event was celebrated on a more extensive scale than at St. Joseph. San Francisco and Sacramento were the two leading cities on the coast in 1860, and the merchants were making money easily and spending it lavishly. A substantial fund was contributed for celebrating the occasion of inaugurating the novel new enterprise, and the capital city of the "Golden" state was gaily decked with flags and bunting. Thousands of people came in from the fields and neighboring camps, and many joined the busy throng and helped participate in the exercises. Business was suspended and the city specially decorated for the occasion. Across the principal streets floral arches were built; cannons boomed from surrounding hills; brass bands played enlivening music; and earnest speeches from state officials and local orators helped make the event one of the proudest days ever celebrated on the Pacific coast.

A pure white steed left Sacramento for the east almost simultaneously with the departure of the black pony from St. Joseph for the west. Harry Roff was the rider east. At the appointed hour the signal was given Roff to start. With his leather pouch filled with letters and a few late papers, he went flying out of town with almost the rapidity of a lightning-express train. The first twenty miles, two "stages," were covered in fifty-nine minutes. He changed horses in ten seconds, and changed again at Folsom; then rode on at a rapid gait to Placerville, the end of his run—an old and important mining camp, nestled at the western slope of the Sierra Nevadas. Roff rode a distance of fifty-five miles all together, making the entire run in two hours and forty-nine minutes, notwithstanding he had a number of hills to cross.

At Placerville Roff was relieved, and the pouch hurriedly thrown across the saddle of "Boston," the next rider, and almost in a twinkling he was off on a seventy-two-mile stretch. He climbed the western slope of the Sierra Nevadas and kept right on, pushing across the range to Fort Churchill. Then followed another stretch of 120 miles to Smith creek, to cover which it took six relays of horses, but the distance was usually made in from nine to ten hours.

The first "express" to reach Salt Lake was from the west, which arrived in the Mormon metropolis on the 7th of April, having left Sacramento on the night of the 3d. The first "pony" out of St. Joseph arrived in the "City of the Saints" on the evening of the 9th. The Mormons were greatly pleased with the establishment of the novel enterprise and there was considerable rejoicing on its arrival, which was mentioned by the *Deseret News*, the church organ at the time, with the announcement: "Although a telegraph is very desirable, we feel well satisfied with this achievement for the present."

The Mormons could hardly realize that such a vast undertaking as the pony express was really in existence. It seemed to them impossible. For the first time Utah was brought within six days' communication with the Missouri river and within seven days of the nation's capital. For years before that time the citizens of Salt Lake City had been accustomed to receiving news from six weeks to three months old.

Among the first dispatches transmitted by the pony express was the news of "a bill amendatory of the act organizing the Territory of Utah," about to be introduced into the United States senate. There was much bitter feeling at the time between the Federal Government and the Mormons. To forestall the latter, it was contemplated changing the name of the territory from Utah to Nevada, thus passing the political power of the territory from Salt Lake to Carson Valley—in reality taking it out of the hands of the Mormons and giving it to the Gentiles. Nevada at that time was one of the most prosperous territories in the Union, and the excitement over silver mining was up to fever heat. Matters were in due time in some manner amicably adjusted, for nothing afterwards was heard of the proposed bill to wipe from the map and blot out the name of "Utah."

The express had been in operation less than a year when the South was on the verge of seceding from the Union. Political movements between the North and South were watched for by the Mormons with intense interest. The entire country, in fact, was apparently trembling from its foundation. The crisis had come, and one by one the states south of Mason and Dixon's line seceded.

The most stirring bit of intelligence transmitted by the "pony" from St. Joseph, early in 1861, was that the air was filled with rumors of war. Soon after, news of the declaration of war was carried through by the fleet pony, and most of the Federal troops in Utah were forthwith ordered to the national capital.

The civil war broke out in about a year after the pony express was started. Never was news more anxiously waited for than on the Pacific coast when hostilities were raging between the North and South. The first tidings of the firing on Fort Sumter reached the Pacific metropolis in eight days, fourteen hours. From that time on a bonus was given by the California business men and public officers to the pony express company, to be distributed among the riders for carrying the war news as fast as possible. The sum of $300 extra was collected for the riders for bringing a bundle of Chicago papers containing news of the battle of Antietam a day earlier than usual to Sacramento, in 1861.

While in operation, a number of really important events were connected with the history of the pony express, not the least among which may be noted the exciting intelligence conveying the news of the election of Abraham Lincoln, in November, 1860; and, less than a month later, the last message of President Buchanan. Both journeys were made in eight days—about as quick time as it was possible to make.

Among the important documents carried from St. Joseph by the first "pony" was a brief message of congratulation from President Buchanan to the governor of California. The few words were transmitted by wire from the executive mansion to St. Joseph, where they were taken off by the operator. This, with one or two official government communications, together with a small bundle of late New York, Chicago and St. Louis newspapers, a few bank drafts, and some important business letters to prominent bankers and merchants in San Francisco, filled the leather mail-pouch of the rider.

A number of remarkably quick trips were made by the fleet "pony," but the quickest one on record was in March, 1861—a little less than a year after the establishment of the novel enterprise—when President Lincoln's first inaugural address was carried through from St. Joseph to Sacramento, 1980 miles, in seven days and seventeen hours; a most extraordinary trip, considering the route and great distance traversed.

Another astonishingly quick trip, a year after the enterprise was started, was made the following April, conveying the exciting news of the bombardment of Fort Sumter and the opening of the war of the rebellion. All this was done, it should be remembered, before a mile of railway or telegraph was in operation westward from the Missouri river in Kansas or Nebraska. On one occasion important dispatches were carried through from St. Joseph to Denver, about 675 miles, in sixty-nine hours; the last ten miles being covered in thirty-one minutes.

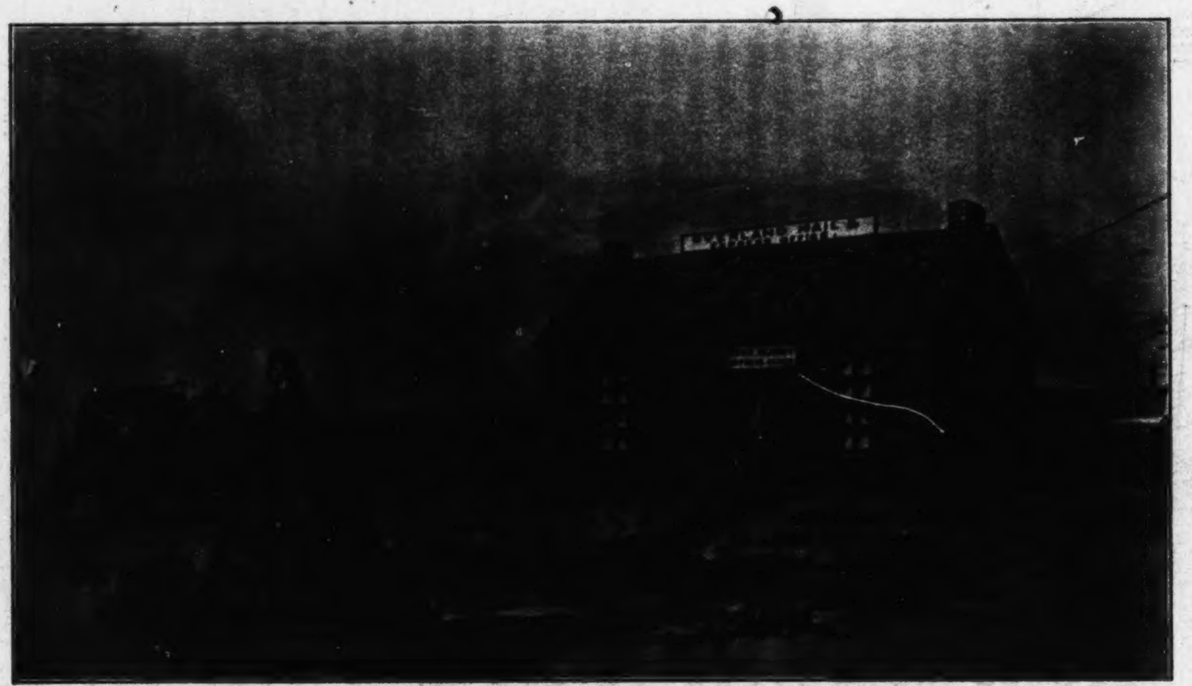
Originally a few of the "stages" along the pony route were twenty-five miles apart, but subsequently these were shortened into ten and fifteen miles, so the distance could be covered much easier by both pony and rider. The animals employed, while almost invariably referred to as "ponies," really were not ponies, but fleet American horses. A few of the steeds, however, were the small, hardy Mexican animals, very fleet and particularly safe for mountain travel.

In making the journey, it was necessary, where the stations were only a few miles apart, for some of the riders to keep their animals on a run almost continuously in order to get through on schedule time. There was not to exceed two minutes' time allowed at any station for a change of pony. When a station was reached, it mattered not at what hour of the day or night, the fresh rider would almost invariably be at his post ready to receive the little sack containing the important dispatches and precious missives; then, jumping into the saddle and pushing the spurs into the flanks of his steed, almost in a twinkling he would be off like the wind.

The route from St. Joseph, after crossing the Missouri river, lay a little south of west until it struck the old overland military road at Kennekuk, forty-four miles out. Thence it diverged a little northwesterly across the Kickapoo Indian reservation *via* Granada, Log Chain, Seneca, Ash Point, Guittard's, Marysville, and Hollenberg; up the charming Little Blue valley to Rock Creek, Big Sandy, Liberty Farm, and over the rolling prairies to Thirty-two-mile Creek; thence across the divide and over the prairies and sand-hills to the Platte river and due west up the valley to Fort Kearney. Often the rider was in sight of droves of deer and antelope and vast herds of buffalo. The trail for a distance of over 300 miles was, for the most part, across the rolling prairies. It was one taken by the Mormons in 1847, and afterward by the Argonauts who went overland to California after the gold discoveries in 1848, and by Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston's army of 5000 men, who went from Fort Leavenworth to Salt Lake City in 1857 and 1858.

Westward from Fort Kearney the road for 200 miles was along the Platte river, near the south bank of the stream, *via* Plum Creek, Midway, Cottonwood Springs, Fremont Springs, O'Fallon's Bluffs, Alkali, Beauvais Ranch, and Diamond Springs, to old Julesburg. Here the South Fork was forded, and the pony moved northwesterly and went up Lodge Pole creek, across the country to Thirty-mile Ridge, and along it to Mud Springs; thence to Court-house Rock, past Chimney Rock and Scott's Bluffs, and on to Fort Laramie; thence over to the foot-hills at the eastern base of the Rocky Mountains, *via* South Pass, to Fort Bridger, Salt Lake City, Camp Floyd, Ruby Valley, the Humboldt, Carson City, Placerville, Folsom, and Sacramento, where the pony was changed for the steamer to San Francisco.

The pony ride across the continent for a goodly portion of the way was as lonesome and weird as it was long and tiresome. Much of the region traversed was a vast wilderness, and had hardly begun to be settled up. For hundreds of miles it seemed as if nothing in the way of vegetation would grow. There were



PONY EXPRESS AND OVERLAND MAIL OFFICE AT FORT KEARNEY, 1861. *Page 112.*

only four military posts already established on the route between the Missouri river and the Pacific ocean, and they at points from 250 to 350 miles apart. For a considerable distance only the stations where a change of animals was made broke the monotony of the dreary ride.

Of the eighty daring riders employed on the line, at times forty were in the saddle going west and forty east. With some of them it mattered little whether it was night or day. Their business was to keep a going, rain or shine; for every twenty-four hours an average distance of about 200 miles must be covered. To make the long ride, it was necessary to cross many ravines, gullies, creeks and rivers on the prairies and plains; ford a number of mountain torrents; go over parched stretches of sand and alkali, often facing clouds of dust; pass through weird and rugged cañons and gorges; and wind their way along high and difficult passes of the snow-capped Rockies and Sierras. Some of the places encountered on the western slope were at first pronounced to be next to impassable, and then only in the late summer and autumn months.

The weight of the letters was limited to twenty pounds, though usually not to exceed fifteen pounds were carried; and these were, as nearly as possible, distributed into four equal parts. While it cost five dollars for each half-ounce letter when the pony enterprise went into operation, it was not long until the post-office department ordered that the rates be reduced to one dollar per half-ounce, and these were the charges which continued until the line was driven out by the Pacific telegraph.

While crossing the mighty western range of mountains, the daring riders demonstrated that there were passes over which they could go at a good speed. As a result, the route selected by them was afterward agreed upon as one of the most feasible by which a railroad might be built and operated through Utah and Nevada, connecting with bands of steel the Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

A considerable part of the distance, it should be remembered, was through a country inhabited by various tribes of hostile Indians. Other portions of the vast region were often swept by terrific hail, sleet, wind and rain storms, and occasionally by furious blizzards and blinding snows. The route across the country embraced a wide stretch of rolling prairie, through which coursed a number of beautiful streams at intervals fringed with belts of timber and willow; thence over the plains and across the back-bone of the continent; over the Wasatch range into the Salt Lake valley through vast expanses of sage-brush; across a long stretch of desolate alkali plains; through the parched region known as the "Sink of the Carson"; thence across the rugged Sierra Nevadas, down the Pacific slope into Placerville; and, lastly, on to the Sacramento valley and into the capital city of California.

The daring riders were sometimes obliged to grapple with sudden dangers, such as snow slides, roaring mountain torrents, and almost irresistible wind-storms, frequently facing clouds of dust and sand; but, in spite of the numerous difficulties, and while occasionally some hours were lost on the trail, there was seldom a trip that was not made on time. The schedule was ten days for eight months in the year, and twelve days for the other four months.

The most lonesome and worst part of the long route lay between Salt Lake City and Sacramento. For several hundred miles the trail extended through a parched, desolate region—virtually a desert waste—much of it a section of alkali dust, where it would appear neither man nor beast could subsist. Along the eastern foot-hills of the Sierras and in the mountain cañons it is said hostile bands of Indians were numerous, and there the relay stations were farther apart.

The first was a highly interesting but somewhat novel and exciting trip. In making the journey the riders were obliged to go day and night, in all kinds of weather, rain or shine, never stopping except to change ponies, until the end of their stretch was reached, often from 75 to 100 miles. Two minutes were allowed for a change at the various relays; but so expert had the "pony" boys become in the business of changing animals that it was usually made in about fifteen seconds.

The time occupied in making the first trip from St. Joseph to Sacramento was nine days and twenty-three hours, while it took eleven days and twelve hours to make the initial trip eastward. But this was little more than one-half the time consumed in making the fastest trip to San Francisco that had ever been made by the Butterfield overland mail coach from St. Louis through southwestern Missouri, the Indian Territory, Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona.

During the last six or seven weeks before the enterprise was abandoned, there were on an average 700 letters a week brought by the "pony" through from the Pacific coast. The telegraph having been finished from the Missouri river to Fort Kearney, the letter pouches were brought from there to Atchison by the overland stage. The pony line was operated semiweekly, and each trip brought about 350 letters. In those last few weeks every pony express letter was mailed at the Atchison post-office, and I thus became quite familiar with them from handling and postmarking each letter—in all, over 4500—while at time employed in that office in the capacity of assistant postmaster and chief clerk, while the great overland mail stages every morning left that city.

The letters, many of which were written on tissue paper, were very light; for it cost something in those days, even after the "pony" rates were reduced to one dollar per half-ounce, to indulge in California correspondence. It was necessary that each letter and message transmitted by the "pony" route should be enclosed in a ten-cent (Government) stamped envelope. Some of the letters were rather bulky, and I have postmarked those that had affixed to them as many as twenty-five one dollar "pony" stamps. In addition to these, there were affixed the regular Government stamps, which were ten cents for each half-ounce. These heavy letters thus cost, in the early '60's, $27.50 each for transit by the pony conveyance. Such correspondence looked like an expensive luxury to an outsider; but time, then as now, to the wide-awake business man, was money, and many of those patronizing the pony express seemed not to care for expense. But this was in the early days of the civil war.

The San Francisco newspaper men were considerably interested in the result of the remarkable run that conveyed to the Pacific President Lincoln's inaugural speech. They contributed a handsome gold watch, which was presented to the fearless rider on the California division who made the best record in annihilating distance on the journey in the Sierra Nevada mountains.

Most of the letters that were brought by the "pony" from California were from merchants, miners, business and professional men in San Francisco, Sacramento, Oakland, Portland, and other prominent points near the coast. A large majority of them were addressed to merchants and business men in New

York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Chicago, St. Louis, and other cities in the East, while there was an occasional one addressed to the chief magistrate of the nation. Quite a number were for senators and representatives from California, and the delegates from Oregon and other Western territories.

Many persons born since 1850 know little or nothing about the pony express, except from heresay. It was a remarkable enterprise in its day and proved of vast importance to the country. To the leading merchants of San Francisco it subsequently appeared almost indispensable. It proved to be a complete success in every way except financially. To Government it was invaluable on the breaking out of the civil war. It is useless to disguise the fact that the enthusiastic projector of the "pony" sunk at least $100,000, and that his partners who lent aid to the enterprise also lost their fortunes. Whether its operation for several years would have brought better results can only be surmised.

It cost an enormous sum of money to organize and equip the pony line, and it was a matter of continual expense to keep the line in shape. Nearly 500 of the best saddle-horses were used; 190 stations had to be kept up, and nearly 200 men were employed as station keepers, in addition to the riders. Most of the grain used by the animals between St. Joseph and Salt Lake had to be transported from Missouri and Iowa across the plains and over the Rocky Mountains at a freight cost of ten to twenty-five cents a pound. On the western division, much of the feed was purchased in Salt Lake City from the Mormons, and distributed over the route beyond as far as the Sierra Nevadas.

While the preliminaries of the pony express were talked about quietly for several weeks by the parties interested, the line was stocked in two months—February and March, 1860—at a cost of over $75,000. The projector was sanguine of its success from the start. He believed the enterprise would support itself, little dreaming that those engaged in it would be out more than the original investment. It is stated as a matter of history that the first "pony" west carried only eight letters. While the express proved to be a costly undertaking, it soon demonstrated—but at an enormous loss—what could be done by Western men of energy and determination.

Really the pony express was the original "fast mail" over the plains and Rockies—across the so-called "Great American

Desert" to the golden shore of the Pacific. In its day it was a blessing to the country; but after it was fairly in operation, annihilating space between the Missouri river and the Golden Gate, beating the fastest time that had ever been made across the continent, it was not long until it was distanced itself by the magnetic telegraph. While the pony line was very useful in its day, the period of its life was comparatively brief. It could not stand the race with electricity, and, when the telegraph line was finished, its usefulness was ended; the enterprise was wiped out almost instantly.

In three months the route was stocked for the great stage line that carried the first daily overland mail. In less than ten years after the pony line was set in motion the first transcontinental railroad was built, on which the iron horse crossed the plains, climbing three lofty mountain ranges. Like the "star of empire," its course was westward. There was no stop until the bands of steel had been laid, in the later '60's, to the Pacific shore, and soon the great railway was running palace sleeping-cars from ocean to ocean.

Mr. A. B. Miller, of Leavenworth, who was quite prominently associated with the great overland freighting firm of Russell, Majors & Waddell, did much in getting everything arranged for operating the pony line. A freighter himself, he had made a great number of trips across the plains and was familiar with almost every mile of the country. He appeared rather conservative in his estimate of the practicability of the enterprise; still he satisfied Russell that the distance between the Missouri river and Salt Lake could be covered in ten days, and that, in five days more, the Pacific coast could be reached.

More than forty years have passed since the pony express was put in operation. Most of the boy riders yet alive are now between fifty and sixty years of age. The few who are living, however, are scattered all over the country, engaged in various pursuits. Some of them are prominently identified with important enterprises and have become wealthy. In their days, in the early '60's, they were quite similar to "cowboys" on the frontier at the present day—ready at any time for a fight or a frolic. From their varied experiences on the frontier—being familiar with the Western prairies, plains, mountain passes, and deserts—they could engage in a fight and trust to luck. Probably no set of companions

PONY EXPRESS AND OVERLAND MAIL LEAVING SMITH'S HOTEL, SENECA, KAN. *Page 125.*

were ever more loyal to each other or to their friends and employers. In all their trips across the continent, and the 650,000 miles ridden by them, it is said only one mail was lost, and that a comparatively small, unimportant one.

The interest in the pony express at San Francisco was so great that quite a large party—many of them prominent citizens—accompanied the animal and its daring rider on its initial trip by river steamer to Sacramento. Everything having been previously arranged at the east and west ends for the trip, at a given signal each rider was off in a twinkling, speeding on his destination toward the rising and setting sun. On the entire line eighty riders were employed. Each rode three ponies and covered a distance of about thirty-three miles; however, at times it was necessary to ride fifty to seventy-five miles.

In California there were many people who, from the very first, seriously doubted the success of the pony express. The newspaper editors in the "Golden" state were among the strongest in their belief that it could never be made a success on account of the Indians. To use their own language, it was "simply inviting slaughter upon all the foolhardy young men who had been engaged as riders."

It was only a short time after the enterprise was started, however, until the bankers, leading miners and business men at San Francisco and other prominent points on the coast began to appreciate its importance. Many believed they could not get along without it, for, by using the telegraph wire to St. Joseph, a message could be carried from there by the swift pony to Sacramento in from ten and one-half to twelve days.

The time for letters between New York and San Francisco was reduced from twenty-three to thirteen days; for important telegraphic news from Washington and the Atlantic seaboard, the time was lowered eight to nine days, a wire having been extended from the Pacific east across the Sierras to Carson City, about 150 miles from Sacramento, over which all telegrams were transmitted, thus saving some twelve hours in transit.

No enterprise of the kind in its day was ever celebrated on the Pacific coast with more enthusiasm than the arrival of the first pony express. At Sacramento the rider and pony went aboard a steamer and a fast run was made the last 125 miles down the Sacramento river to the great Western metropolis. As the steamer swung out into the muddy stream the event was flashed over the wire, and the news of the arrival of the first mail across the continent by the fleet pony was published with flaming head-lines in a number of the coast evening papers.

At San Francisco the arrival of the express had been anticipated and an immense throng congregated at the wharf to welcome it. Although it was past midnight, bands of music were out, the fire department paraded, and crowds from every part of the city gathered to witness the celebration of one of the biggest enterprises of its day ever known on the far-western coast.

In about two months from the establishment of the pony express the enterprise received a serious backset, and many feared the service would have to stop. Several tribes of Indians in the Northwest — the Bannocks, Piutes, and Shoshones — had gone on one of their periodical outbreaks west of Salt Lake, and the pony route for a long distance was interrupted. While on the war-path the savages burned a number of the company's stations, ran off considerable stock and committed other depredations, besides murdering several station keepers.

This disastrous raid forced the company to suspend operations for a few trips before the line, it might be said, had fairly gone into operation. Many thought this would be the last of the pony express, and it probably would have been had others, less determined, been at the head of it; but the originator knew no such word as "fail," and determined to keep the enterprise going regardless of the consequences. Volunteers were raised, the outbreak settled, stations rebuilt and stocked, and the line was soon reopened. The trouble and delay necessitated an expenditure by the company of upwards of $75,000, an amount which would have financially paralyzed almost any corporation not possessed of genuine Western pluck and "go-aheaditiveness."

While the pony express lasted it was of incalculable benefit on the Pacific coast, particularly while there was a rupture between the North and the South, for copies of Eastern metropolitan newspapers, printed to order on tissue paper, and placed in letter envelopes, were carried across the continent by the fleet pony to the leading San Francisco dailies, which could furnish the news to their readers at least two weeks ahead of the Concord overland mail coach, and nearly three weeks in advance of the Pacific Mail Company's ocean steamers.

The pay of pony express riders was fixed at from $50 to $150 a month and board. William F. Cody ("Buffalo Bill") and a few others, who had extra risks from riding through regions infested by the Cheyennes and Comanches—among the most-feared savages roaming the plains of Nebraska and Colorado in those days—were paid $150 for their services. To make the ride they were often obliged to take their lives in their own hands. Along the 2000-mile trail, stretching from the "Big Muddy" to the great ocean, relay stations were established at regular intervals, and bronchos and a number of men equipped with rifles and revolvers were stationed at each.

It was not unexpected that mishaps should occur while making the long journey across the continent. Now and then a rider would lose the road, and, bewildered, wander around for hours in search of the lost trail. Once in a while a rider would be caught in a blinding snow-storm; another would be impeded in his ride by a swollen stream on the plains or in the mountains; and thus considerable valuable time would be lost. Occasionally a horse would drown and the rider, knowing it was a case of life or death with him, would be obliged to swim ashore and, with the mail-pouch of valuable letters on his back, walk to the next station and secure a fresh pony to complete his ride.

The letters in care of the pony express were wrapped in oil-silk as a protection against the weather, being then placed in the four pockets of the leather pouch specially prepared for them. The reason for so many pockets was that the weight might be, as near as possible, evenly distributed, and that there be little inconvenience to both pony and rider. The pouch was provided with locks, and keys to it were distributed at the various forts along the route and also at Salt Lake City and Carson. Even with the packages of letters wrapped in oil-silk, they were sometimes injured by water when it became necessary for the riders to swim their horses across swollen streams. In at least one instance it is recorded that the horse was drowned, but the rider, with the letters, was saved. At times there would be a lively chase for the rider by Indians, but only once has there been mention made when he was overtaken. On this occasion the rider was scalped, but the pony escaped with the letter pouch, which was subsequently recovered out on the plains and the letters promptly forwarded to their destination.

At first the idea of a pony express that would do what was promised early in 1860 was hooted at by the enemies of the novel enterprise. But, in spite of this, the originators of the scheme were so firm in their belief that it would finally win that they did not hesitate to invest $100,000 in it. They equipped the line and established stations at frequent intervals for a distance of about 2000 miles. Russell's partners in the freighting business, Messrs. Majors and Waddell, did not have great faith in its success, but they sunk a vast fortune in it, believing that it would be as "bread cast on the waters."

The pony express lasted less than eighteen months. Two months before it stopped it was followed by the daily overland stage-coach, in July, 1861; four months later came the Pacific telegraph, in competition with which it was as an ox train compared to the lightning express; and finally the completion of the first railway across the continent, in May, 1869, forced the Concord stage-coach, as the telegraph had the pony, to the rear.

Some days the receipts of the pony express were enormous, amounting to $1000 or more. There are instances where official papers were dispatched by it which cost as high as fifty dollars. It is said that while England and China were at war, in the early '60's, the reports sent from the British squadron in "celestial" waters to London were carried overland by the pony express, then the safest and most speedy route for transmitting news from that part of Asia to Europe. The "pony" charges on one of these official war documents were $135. The charge on ordinary letters and official papers, according to their weight, even up to within a few weeks before the pony express was discontinued, ran all the way from one dollar to twenty-five dollars.

The stock used by the pony-express riders was in every way far superior to anything possessed by the Indians. In a race for life on the plains, the pony riders, mounted on their fleet animals, could soon leave the redskins far in the rear. It took the Indians only a short time to learn that they were not in it in such a race. To accomplish their purpose, it became customary for them, however, occasionally to pick off a rider when in a weird cañon or ravine; for the skulking savages, secreted behind rocks, would take such an advantage and pour a volley of bullets or a number of sharp-pointed arrows into the rider, and, in this way, would sometimes be successful in getting the animal they so much desired.

While in operation, the pony express was a great attraction on the plains. Every one going overland steadily watched for it. After the wire of the Pacific telegraph line had been stretched across the continent from Omaha to San Francisco, in the fall of that year—1861—the enterprise suddenly vanished. Its period of usefulness had ended. It could not make the race with electricity, and was soon numbered among the great undertakings of the past. But, in its inception and organization, it met the needs of the country, and well served the people who, separated by a vast stretch of almost uninhabited land, needed a means of rapid communication.

Johnnie Frey, the first "pony" rider out from St. Joseph, was about twenty years of age, and his weight did not exceed 125 pounds. He rode to Seneca, a distance of eighty miles, averaging about twelve and one-half miles an hour in addition to changes. At one time Frey made the ride from Seneca to Granada and return, thirty-two miles, in one hour and twenty minutes. He was born at Rushville, Mo., and, after the civil war broke out, enlisted in the service of his country as a member of General Blunt's scouts. He was a brave young man and participated in some desperate fights in the Southwest. He was killed in Arkansas, in 1863, in a hand-to-hand fight with a company known as the "Arkansas rangers." Before giving up his life in the last engagement, he killed, single-handed, no less than five of the "rangers."

Jack Keetley was another rider, who, for awhile, rode from St. Joseph to Seneca with Frey and Melville Baughn. Keetley at one time rode from Rock Creek to St. Joseph, thence back to Rock Creek, thence to Seneca, and from Seneca back to Rock Creek again, a distance of 340 miles, without rest or sleep, covering the entire "run" in thirty-one hours, making a fraction less than eleven miles an hour the entire distance. The last five miles, from a small stream east of Ash Point, he fell asleep in the saddle, and in that condition rode to the end of his long "run" into Seneca.

The pony ridden by Baughn from Fort Kearney to Thirty-two-mile creek was stolen by a thief, who rode the animal to Loup Fork. Mel. shortly got on the trail of the thief and secured the stolen pony, and took it back to Fort Kearney, where he found the "pony" letter pouch awaiting him. He quickly threw the

OVERLAND PONY EXPRESS—THE RELAY STATION—CHANGING PONIES.

saddle on the animal and finished his trip, but he was considerably behind schedule time. In a few years afterward Mel. was hung for murder at Seneca, Kan.

Jim Beatley was another "pony" rider. He was from Richmond, Va., but his real name was Foote. He was about twenty-five years of age and weighed in the neighborhood of 160 pounds. At one time Beatley rode from Seneca to Big Sandy, fifty miles and back again, "doubling" his route twice in one week. He was afterwards killed in a quarrel with an overland employee by the name of Milt. Motter, in 1862, at Farrell's ranch, a stage station known as Big Sandy, in southern Nebraska.

William Boulton, who rode with Beatley some three months, was between thirty and forty years old and his weight was not far from 130 pounds. At last accounts, he was said to be living somewhere in Minnesota. It is related that while Boulton was once riding between Seneca and Guittard's, and when within five miles of the latter station, his pony by some means unknown became disabled, and he was obliged to leave the animal, while he walked the distance, with the pouch of "pony" letters on his back, and, securing a fresh pony, finished the trip.

Don C. Rising, now of Wetmore, Nemaha county, Kansas, was a "pony" rider for a few trips in 1860. He was born at Painted Post, Steuben county, New York, December 1, 1844, and came west in 1857. He rode from November, 1860, until the express was superseded by the telegraph, a little less than a year following. He went on the line a few days before he was seventeen years old, and most of the time while employed rode on different parts of the route between Big Sandy and Fort Kearney. The average speed was most always kept up, but Don claims to have made two "runs" on special orders when he averaged a speed of twenty miles an hour between Big Sandy and Rock Creek.

A young man who went by the name of "Little Yank," perhaps twenty-five years old and weighing not over 100 pounds, was another rider along the Platte between Cottonwood Springs and old Julesburg, who often covered 100 miles at a trip.

A rider named Hogan rode from Julesburg northwest across the Platte. His present whereabouts are unknown, but at last accounts he was living somewhere in Nebraska. His "run" extended to Mud Springs, near the historic Chimney Rock; distance, about eighty miles.

Jimmy Clark was a rider on the eastern division between St. Joseph and Fort Kearney. He made the "run" between Big Sandy and Hollenberg; and, occasionally, he went as far west as Liberty Farm, on the Little Blue.

George Spurr, Henry Wallace, George Towne and James McDonald each rode at different times along the route between St. Joseph and Salt Lake City.

Theodore Rand, now employed by the Burlington route, and residing at Atchison, was engaged as a rider from the time the "pony" was inaugurated until it disappeared. Rand rode 110 miles, from Box Elder to old Julesburg, covering the distance both ways at night in all seasons. While the schedule time was ten miles an hour, he often made his "run" in nine hours, an average of something more than twelve miles an hour. When he first went on the line he rode each animal twenty-five miles, but later he was given a fresh horse every fifteen miles.

The late Jim Moore, who kept Washington ranch and a trading post in the South Platte valley, between old Julesburg and Beaver Creek station, in overland-staging days, was a "pony" rider. Moore made a remarkable ride on the 8th day of June, 1860, when the pony line had been in operation little more than two months. He was at Midway station—the half-way point between the Missouri river and Denver—when a rider bearing a highly important Government dispatch for the Pacific coast arrived. Without losing a minute, Jim mounted his pony and was off for old Julesburg, in the northeast part of Colorado, 140 miles distant. He made his ride as quickly as possible, fleet animals being placed at his disposal at intervals along the route. Reaching Julesburg, he met the east-bound rider with another important Government dispatch from the Pacific, destined for the national capital.

Unfortunately, as it happened, the rider who should have been the bearer of this dispatch east had been killed the day before. With less than ten minutes' rest, and without even stopping to eat, Moore jumped into the saddle, and, in a twinkling, was raising a terrible dust on the road down the Platte towards Midway. He made the round trip of 280 miles in fourteen hours, forty-six minutes, an average of over eighteen miles an hour. The west-bound dispatch reached Sacramento in eight days, nine hours, forty minutes, from St. Joseph.

Bill Cates, said to be quite a Rocky Mountain character, and now residing somewhere in the Rockies, was one of the early pony express riders, and, it is reported, had a number of daring adventures along the Platte and in the mountains while in the employ of the company.

James W. Brink, besides being one of the early mail-carriers on the plains, was also one of the original pony express riders, going on that route at its opening in April, 1860. He spent some eleven years on the plains and has had a somewhat checkered career. He was known among the stage-drivers as "Dock" Brink. He was at Rock Creek station with "Wild Bill" when the bloody fight took place with the McCandless gang, when no less than five outlaws were killed.

William F. Cody, known the world over as "Buffalo Bill," and who was a resident of Kansas in his boyhood days, was among the first of the pony express riders; likewise he was one of the most fearless and dashing of the boys who acted in that capacity. His route embraced a ride over a trail of seventy-five miles on the north fork of the Platte river to Three Crossings of the Sweetwater. The course was a long and extremely dangerous one. It extended through a region not only beset at times by highway robbers, but it was also infested with bands of bloodthirsty Indians. In many respects this ride was a perilous one. On the Sweetwater, where the old trail meandered along a rugged cañon, the treacherous river extended to the walls on both sides of the cañon, and here the riders were obliged to cross the stream—often when it was a roaring torrent—three times in a few rods; hence the name, Three Crossings.

Young Cody, however, was the boy for the occasion. No emergency in connection with his duties ever arose to which he was not equal. During his career on the plains while a pony express rider, and during his forty years of adventure in the great West since then, he has gone through scores of exciting and dangerous scenes, many of them at the risk of his life. He has probably seen as many wild Indians as any one; and he has undoubtedly made more "good Indians" than any other living man. He covered at one time one of the longest "runs" ever made on the "pony" route between the "Big Muddy" and the great ocean. After riding his seventy-five miles, and about to hand over his mail-pouch to the next rider, he found the latter dead, having been killed in a fight; so Cody volunteered to continue the "run," eighty-five miles, in addition to the seventy-five he had already ridden. The entire distance—remarkable as it may appear—was accomplished inside of schedule time. He then turned back and made the distance to Red Buttes in due time, a continuous ride of over 320 miles without rest at an average gait of fifteen miles an hour.

William James, born at Lynchburg, Va., in 1843, was, when eighteen years of age, a rider for the pony express. He was called Bill James for short. He crossed the plains with his parents by wagon train when only five years old. At that time it took three months to travel a distance that can now be covered inside of three days. While riding the "pony," before the days of the telegraph and the railroad across the continent, his "run" was from Simpson's Park to Cole Springs, in the Smoky Valley range of mountains in Nevada. The distance was sixty miles, but he made the round trip and rode 120 miles in twelve hours.

The ponies ridden by James were California mustangs, in their day considered the fleetest of animals in that part of the country. Ten miles an hour was made, including all stops. In the sixty miles ridden he changed ponies four times, making one change at the end—five ponies making the "run" one way of sixty miles. Very little time was consumed in the change of ponies. On riding up to a station a pony was standing there, saddled and bridled, and all it was necessary to do was to simply throw the letter pouch across the pony's back, mount, and be off as fast as the animal could go.

The route ridden by James crossed two summits and two valleys in the mountains, and was described as a desolate region, inhabited almost exclusively by the Shoshone Indians. Occasionally there could be seen a camp of emigrants, on their way to the coast. In going over this "run" at times it was an extremely lonesome ride. The journey was seldom made, he said, without wondering if he would get through; or, reaching his destination, if he would ever get back.

Few, if any, of the riders had more exciting experiences on the pony express than Bill James; still it never occurred to him, at the time, that there was anything extraordinary about them.

Robert Haslam ("Pony Bob"), now engaged in business in Chicago, made a great record as one of the pony express riders. His field was in Nevada, a portion of the ride along the Carson river. One of his rides in 1860 is spoken of as one of the longest ever made in the history of the pony line—380 miles. The reason why this extraordinarily long ride had to be made was because one of the riders had been killed by the Indians and one of the stations burnt. Strange as it may appear, this long distance, beset by perils on every side, was accomplished without accident and only a few hours behind the regular schedule.

Some of the riders apparently knew nothing of fear and scores of times risked their lives while on duty. One of them, Charles Cliff, was riding when only seventeen years old. He rode on alternate days, and often covered his eighty miles in eight hours. He had a narrow escape while freighting on the plains three years later. He was engaged in a fight with Indians at Scott's Bluff, and received three balls in his body and twenty-seven in his clothes. The party he was with had nine wagons and were beseiged for three days by over 100 Sioux, when relieved by the arrival of a large wagon train.

Among the riders who from time to time rode the "pony" from St. Joseph westward were Johnnie Frey, Jack Keetley, and Charles and Gus Cliff. Only two of these four boys are now known to be alive—Charles Cliff, who resides in St. Joseph, and Keetley, who is said to be living somewhere in Montana. What few of the seventy-five others who were employed on the route and are still alive are scattered throughout the country and widely separated. Following are the names of some of the men who, at various times, were riders on the pony express route:

Baughn, Melville.
Beatley, Jim.
"Boston."
Boulton, William.
Brink, James W.
Burnett, John.
Bucklin, Jimmy.
Carr, William.
Carrigan, William.
Cates, Bill.
Clark, Jimmy.
Cliff, Charles.
Cliff, Gus.
Cody, William F.
Egan, Major.
Ellis, J. K.
Faust, H. J.
Fisher, John.
Frey, Johnnie.
Gentry, Jim.
Gilson, Jim.
Gilson, Sam.
Hamilton, Sam.
Haslam, Robert
Hogan, ——.
Huntington, Let.
"Irish Tom."
James, William.
Jenkins, Will D.
Kelley, Jay G.
Keetley, Jack.
"Little Yank."
Martin, Bob.
McCall, J. G.
McDonald, James.
McNaughton, Jim.
Moore, Jim.
Perkins, Josh.
Rand, Theodore.
Richardson, Johnson.
Riles, Bart.
Rising, Don C.
Roff, Harry.
Spurr, George.
Thacher, George.
Towne, George.
Wallace, Henry.
Westcott, Dan.
Zowgaltz, Jose.

Will D. Jenkins, who in early days resided near Big Sandy, Neb., writes from Olympia, Wash., as follows:

"How well I remember those days back in the early '60's, especially the old pony express days, when that system of conveying messages was put into operation. Although only a 'substitute,' I shall always retain a certain degree of pride in the fact that I 'rode stations' on the old pony express, and that at a time and place when it was far safer to be at home. I remember, also, Bob Emery's wild stage drive from 'The Narrows.' I was an eyewitness of that exciting event; yet I have somehow got the names of those Little Blue valley stations mixed up and confused in my mind. Thirty-seven years ago it was—a long time to remember. But the exciting drive was from 'The Narrows' to the next station east. During my boyhood days on the plains I witnessed many exciting chases, but none that would compare with that wild drive. One Sioux warrior, mounted on a fleeter pony than the other Indians possessed, would make a complete circle of the stage, and, at each circle, would send in a volley of arrows. But Bob succeeded in landing his passengers at the station, none of them being injured."

Capt. Levi Hensel, of Pueblo, Colo., who lived on the line of the overland stage and pony express route, at Seneca, Kan., writes a private letter, and speaks of the early times as follows:

"I have been racking my brains to think of something about the pony express worth while to go in your book, and can't for my life think of anything that is not hackneyed. The stirring incidents always occurred farther west than Seneca, where I was located. I had the contract to shoe the overland stage and pony express horses that ran from Kennekuk to Big Sandy up to the time I threw down my hammer and went into the army. I missed the best three years to make money by doing so, but do n't regret that I helped save the Union. Sometimes they ran ponies in from Fort Kearney and beyond to be shod, because no one up that far had proper facilities for shoeing bad horses. The animals that Johnny Frey and Jim Beatley used to ride were the worst 'imps of Satan' in the business. The only way I could master them was to throw them and get a rope around each foot and stake them out, and have a man on the head and another on the body while I trimmed the feet and nailed the shoes on, and then they would squeal and bite all the time I was working with them. It generally took half a day to shoe one of them. But travel! They never seemed to get tired. I knew of Johnny Frey riding one of them more than fifty miles without a change. He was about as tough every way as the ponies; and Jim Beatley was another off the same piece. Jim was murdered in some sort of a cowboy row up the road,* and poor Johnny Frey was killed on the Canadian river by bushwackers. I saw him within a few minutes after he was killed. He was one of General Blunt's scouts, along with W. S. Tough, Johnny Sinclair, and that gang. We were returning from chasing Cooper, Cabball, Steele and Stan. Watie through the Indian Nation almost to Boggy Depot, Tex., and the scouts ran into a gang of Indian bushwackers at Canadian Crossing. Frey was one of the most noted of all the pony express riders and had many hairbreadth escapes from Indians on the plains. He never knew what fear was, and on several occasions made runs through hostile bands when other riders weakened."

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*Beatley was killed by Milt. Motter at Big Sandy station, in the early '60's.

CHAPTER VI.

BUILDING THE PACIFIC TELEGRAPH AND RAILROADS.

THE act of Congress incorporating the Pacific telegraph was secured by Hiram Sibley, of New York, June 16, 1860, and by him accepted the 22d of September following. By one of the provisions of the act it was stipulated that a ten-word dispatch from Brownsville, Neb., to San Francisco should not cost over three dollars; and by another, that the line should be completed and in operation on or before July 31, 1862; also, that Government dispatches should have precedence over all other business.

The wire was stretched to Fort Kearney in November, 1860. Work on the great transcontinental line, however, really was not begun until early in the summer of 1861; but no telegraph line on earth was ever rushed through so rapidly. While it was believed to be an impossibility to finish the great enterprise by the time specified by Congress, yet so rapid was the work of construction pushed, that in less than four and a half months from its inception the entire line was completed, and dispatches for the first time could be sent from ocean to ocean.

The construction of the line was, in its day, a gigantic undertaking. When it was completed it was regarded as a great enterprise. Its extension westward from Omaha was begun by its projector, Mr. Edward Creighton, one of the pioneers of telegraphy west of the Missouri river. When he began its construction he never stopped a day until the height of his ambition had been reached—the wires stretched westward across three chains of lofty mountains to the Golden Gate.

There being no room about the military quarters at Fort Kearney suitable for the telegraph office when the line reached there, the table, instruments, battery and other paraphernalia belonging to the company were placed in the sod building erected in the later '50's by Mr. Moses H. Sydenham, the first postmaster at Fort Kearney, who was at the time proprietor of a small book, stationery and news depot in connection with the post-office. Small as it was, it did a splendid business for a frontier enterprise in pioneer days. Being a thoroughly wide-awake and progressive man, Mr. Sydenham generously consented to allow the operator to come into his building and occupy a corner.

The first operator on the line at Fort Kearney was a Canadian named Ellsworth. Subsequently, when travel across the plains kept steadily increasing and the business of the telegraph company continued to grow accordingly, the operator was allowed an assistant, in the person of a most estimable and capable young man named Frank E. Lehmer, who had been one of the early manipulators of the "key" at Atchison, Kan. Henry Shelden, of Deposit, N. Y., a very pleasant and agreeable young gentleman, was operator in charge of the Fort Kearney office in the spring and summer of 1863.

As an incentive for pushing work rapidly, Congress guaranteed a subsidy of $40,000 a year to the first company that should construct a line across the continent. Work then began in a hurry by both the western and the eastern companies. When the California company had reached a point east only 450 miles from Salt Lake City, Mr. Creighton's line from Omaha was 1100 miles from Salt Lake; yet so rapidly was the work of construction carried forward by him, that it was finished to the Mormon capital and in operation two weeks before the California line reached that point.

On account of the steadily increasing commerce of the plains in the early '60's, and the fact that there were several companies of troops stationed at Fort Kearney, made this the most important office on the eastern division of the great stage line. At this point the telegraph line crossed from the north to the south bank of the Platte, and here was the intersection of the great overland mail route from Atchison, and it also was the western terminus of the Western Stage Company's route, which operated lines to Fort Kearney from Omaha and Nebraska City. There was no telegraph line on the overland stage route along the Little Blue river between Atchison and this prominent military post, and all dispatches from Atchison sent to Fort Kearney and beyond were transmitted up the Missouri river *via* Omaha.

From Fort Kearney westward the wire followed along the south bank of the Platte, a distance of 200 miles, to old Julesburg (Overland City), in the northeastern part of Colorado. An office was afterwards opened at the station at Cottonwood Springs, 100 miles west of Fort Kearney, and, subseqently, one was opened at Alkali Lake station, about fifty miles west of Cottonwood; and later another was opened at Plum Creek, in the heart of the buffalo region, where Indian outrages afterward frequently occurred, only thirty-five miles west of Fort Kearney.

At old Julesburg, 200 miles east of Denver, the wire was stretched across the South Platte, and the line from there went northwest, where offices were established at the stage stations at Ham's Fork, Fort Bridger, and Salt Lake City.

Before the days of railroads on the plains, the telegraph line appeared to be indispensable for most of the leading overland freighters on their way to Denver and points beyond. With the aid of the wire, they could, after reaching Fort Kearney, at intervals of about fifty miles along the Platte, keep posted on prices of grain, provisions, produce, etc., at Chicago and St. Louis, as well as at the leading outfitting points on the Missouri river.

As an illustration, one Atchison firm alone—still alive and now doing business in Denver—with a large quantity of whisky and other spirits *en route* across the plains, during the civil war, made nearly $50,000 extra on their supply of liquors in transit simply by adding the special tax Congress had imposed since their shipment from the Missouri river, the news of which reached their ox train by wire from Atchison *via* St. Joseph and Omaha at one of the stations west of Fort Kearney.

It was steadily becoming known early in the '60's that vast quantities of the precious metals were lying hidden among the hills in Colorado, and that Denver, on account of the discoveries being made—naturally being a tributary of the gold diggings—was soon destined to become an important city. None were more keen to see this and grasp the situation than the Pacific Telegraph Company. In the summer of 1863 a branch of the main line was extended west along the right bank of the South Platte, following the stage road from old Julesburg to Denver, offices on the way being opened at Valley Junction and Living Springs stations, which were located at intervals of about fifty miles.

The line was finished to Denver on the 10th of October, 1863, leaving the Platte about 100 miles west of old Julesburg, at Junction, and going from there over what was known as the Denver cut-off, a toll-road laid out from ten to thirty miles south of the old traveled river road (the latter in the form of a semicircle), thereby saving, it was alleged, something like ten or fifteen miles in distance. As might naturally be expected, a jollification followed the completion of the line across the plains to the Colorado metropolis. Messages of congratulation on the day of completion of the line to Denver were exchanged between that city and Omaha and other Eastern points. A number of men doing business there, whose families were residing in the States and Canadas, took advantage, and communicated with them from Colorado for the first time by wire.

It cost something in 1863, when prices were on a war basis, to indulge in such a luxury as a telegram. To send a ten-word dispatch east from Denver at that time to New York cost $9.10; and for each additional word sixty-three cents. The rate from Denver to Boston was $9.25; and to Chicago and St. Louis the uniform price was $7.50; to Omaha it was only $4. In 1888, after a lapse of twenty-five years, the rate for a telegram from Denver to New York had gone down to one dollar; for a night message, seventy-five cents.

A few weeks after the line reached Denver it was extended up into the mountains forty miles, to Central City, then one of the busiest and most promising mining camps in the Rockies, where an office was put in and did a large business from the several adjacent settlements.

None appreciated the advent of the telegraph to Colorado so much as did the newspaper publishers. It was a big thing for the *Rocky Mountain News*, the pioneer journal of the Colorado mining region, when the telegraph line reached Denver and its dispatches were taken fresh from the wire, instead of getting them as they had been doing, from the operator at old Julesburg and from there carried 200 miles in the way-pocket in charge of the messenger and overland stage drivers.

While the telegraph line was under construction, the company was extremely fortunate in finding, near Cottonwood Springs, 100 miles west of Fort Kearney—about half way between there and old Julesburg—large quantities of cedar poles. The cañons were full of cedars, which were cut and transported on wagons east and west along the route for hundreds of miles. A number of telegraph offices on the plains were built of these logs, as were also several stage stations and stables.

Many buildings for a considerable distance along the Platte, occupied by ranchmen and traders, were constructed of the material secured from near Cottonwood Springs. Fuel was scarce and expensive between Cottonwood and the mountains. The fire-wood used by both the station keeper and operator at old Julesburg was of cedar, hauled there by oxen a distance of over 100 miles. At Spring Hill, Valley and Beaver Creek stations, the most of the fuel was hauled from Cottonwood Springs, from 150 to 175 miles.

The line from California east was built through to Salt Lake, where it met the line built west from Omaha. During the period of its construction, Brigham Young, the head of the Mormon church, was a prominent contractor in supplying poles, subsistence, and transportation. The renowned prophet lent his invaluable assistance in the rapid construction of the line, and in extending it from Ogden south to Salt Lake City, which was of inestimable advantage to the merchants engaged in business at the Mormon capital. The first dispatch east from Salt Lake was sent during the civil war—October 18, 1861—by Brigham Young, and was addressed to the president of the Pacific Telegraph Company, at Cleveland, Ohio, as follows:

> "Utah has not seceded, but is firm for the constitution and laws of our once happy country."

The same day Secretary and Acting Governor Frank Fuller thus saluted President Lincoln:

> "Utah, whose citizens strenuously resist all imputations of disloyalty, congratulates the President upon the completion of an enterprise which spans a continent."

The answer flashed back was as follows:

> "The Government reciprocates your congratulations.—A. LINCOLN."

After the completion of the great telegraph line, in the fall of 1861, the charge for a ten-word message from Salt Lake City to New York was $7.50, whereas, two decades later, the rate had dropped to $1.50.

It is somewhat remarkable, but nevertheless a notable truth, that after the telegraph line was completed it was seldom molested by the Indians. Frequently it would be down and out of working order for a number of days at a time, but the trouble was usually caused by storms. Occasionally desperadoes would commit a crime, and throw down the line, so they could make their escape from the country before the repairs could be made. Although it was often alleged that the mischief was done by the Indians, it is almost certain that they were innocent of the charge. The single wire reaching from pole to pole which passed through their hunting-grounds they considered as something sacred, having been taught that it extended east directly to the White House, and was private property, built by, and belonging exclusively to, the "Great Father," at Washington.

The civil war was raging furiously when the telegraph across the continent was completed. The line was opened for through business to San Francisco October 22, 1861. The first message received in New York from the far-famed city on the western coast was as follows:

> "The Pacific to the Atlantic sends greeting; and may both oceans be dry before a foot of all the land that lies between them shall belong to any other than one united country."

Before the close of the year 1866, the long, tedious ride by stage overland between the ends of each railroad was shortened from seventeen to ten days. It was during the year 1865, however, eighteen months after work had begun on the Central Pacific at Sacramento, before the first rail had been put down on the east end of the Union Pacific at Omaha. The foot-hills of the western slope of the Sierra Nevadas had already been reached by the iron horse on the Central Pacific. After beginning work on the east end of the line, the Union Pacific laid 200 miles of track during the first twelve months, and in March, 1866, the line had reached a point some 300 miles west of Omaha.

During the wonderful progress of the road, its contractors put down in one month sixty-five miles of track. Work continued to go forward, and track-laying was kept up summer and winter, but the Central Pacific company, in surmounting the difficulties of getting over the Sierras, was delayed five or six months by snow.

The materials for the Union Pacific at first went to Omaha up the Missouri river by steamboat, a large number of boats being used for the purpose; but after Chicago and Omaha were finally united by iron bands nearly all supplies went forward across Iowa over the Northwestern without delay to the end of track.

The rolling-stock and much of the other materials for the Central Pacific were obliged to make the long ocean voyage around Cape Horn, covering a distance of 19,000 miles. An immense amount of material was in this way transported. It is a matter of history that at one time no less than thirty vessels, loaded almost exclusively with rolling-stock, aggregating hundreds of thousands of tons, were on the long sea voyage.

The snow-capped summit of the Sierras was reached by the Central Pacific in the summer of 1867, and on the 30th of November following the first passenger-train ran there from Sacramento. At first it appeared like a herculean task to get over the lofty western range. The difficulty was great, for it was found necessary to pierce the mountain by no less than fifteen tunnels, aggregating a distance considerably more than a mile, one at the summit being the longest—1659 feet—and way up 7042 feet above ocean level, or more than a mile and a quarter high.

In building the road, an army of some 10,000 men and more than 1000 teams were steadily engaged, making their way eastward in a sort of zigzag course down the eastern slope of the Sierras. Work across this mighty range, where so many tunnels had to be bored through granite, and where many miles of massive snow-sheds must be constructed, was necessarily slow, while up the Platte valley, on the Union Pacific, with the immense force employed in building, the track was being spiked down at the rate of two and one-half miles a day.

The road progressed so rapidly that in October, 1867, the army of builders employed on the Union Pacific reached the foot-hills of the Rockies, 500 miles west of Omaha, after which further progress was slow, compared with the work already finished.

Sherman, the highest point on the road—likewise the highest altitude in the United States then reached by the iron horse—was nestled on the back-bone of the continent, and lay 8424 feet above tide. It was 1382 feet above the highest point reached on the Central Pacific; at the time considered a remarkable feat in engineering. In five years after the first rail was laid on the west end, nearly 700 miles of track, all together, had been put down by the two companies.

Business in those early days was booming, and few men, if any, were idle. Every man capable of work was engaged and sent to the front. At one time the number of men that had been concentrated for the construction of the two lines reached 25,000, and upwards of 5000 teams were employed. Between fifty and one hundred locomotives and hundreds of freight-cars were daily employed on each road, and more than a thousand tons of material and subsistence were daily being hurried to the front over the two lines. At the head of Great Salt Lake, at what was known as Promontory Point, the two roads finally met. In 1867 the gap between them was a little over 1000 miles.

In the summer of 1866 there was rapid work done by both companies. Never before was there such lively railway construction, in this or any other country, considering the many obstacles that necessarily had to be surmounted. Each company had its army equipped with picks and shovels, bars and sledges, thoroughly drilled for every emergency. With renewed energy work went forward each day, and there was no let up along the route in the mighty task laid out for them.

In the spring of 1869 a comparatively short gap lay between the two roads, and this was rapidly being closed up. The intervening space, that was over 1000 miles two years before, was now less than 200, and day by day this distance was "growing small by degrees and beautifully less." Each company was doing its best to get the most road. When the Union Pacific was finished to a point only five miles east of Promontory, the Central Pacific outfit astonished every one by laying nine miles of track in a single day, beating every previous record known in railway building.

The two gangs of track-layers day by day and hour by hour were steadily nearing each other. They met face to face at Promontory Summit, a little west of Salt Lake, on the morning of May 10, 1869. Then began the closing exercises of the great undertaking that long since made the completion of the line historic. The road-bed had for some weeks been finished, and it was understood that the closing exercises would take place where the track-layers met. The last tie put down was of laurel, cut in the mountains of California. It had been beautifully polished for the special occasion, and was temporarily but carefully put in place in the road-bed; then the last rail was put down and spiked. The two locomotives, panting, were on the track facing each other.

The final exercises finishing the road were quite impressive, viz., the shaking of hands across the track by Governor Stanford, president of the Central Pacific, and Vice-president Durant, of the Union Pacific. These two officials were the heroes of the occasion. After hand-shaking, the event was followed by each driving a golden spike, and the ceremonies ended. The Atlantic and Pacific oceans, separated more than 3500 miles by four lofty mountain ranges, were at last joined together by bands of steel. Immediately the telegraph began ticking off the joyful tidings, that were flashed in a twinkling to every part of the United States and to each quarter of the globe. Apparently there was nothing more to be done. The first great transcontinental railway, then the most important enterprise of its kind in the world, was at last completed.

The Deseret telegraph line had been finished from Ogden down to Salt Lake City, and the news of the driving of the last spike at Promontory Point, completing the Pacific railroad, was flashed over the wire simultaneously with its transmission throughout the length and breadth of the Union. On receipt of the news in the Mormon capital, instantly the stars and stripes were unfurled from public buildings and other prominent places, brass and martial bands stationed expectantly at several points struck up lively airs, and artillery salutes were fired. The principal stores and factories, and public and private offices, were then closed and business suspended for the remainder of the day. Eight months afterward, on the 10th of January, 1870, the last spike completing the Utah Central railroad from Ogden to Salt Lake City was driven by Brigham Young.

No part of the country through which the railroad was built enjoyed the enterprise so much as did the Mormons. They had long been wanting more rapid transportation and closer communication with the East and West. Brigham Young, as early as 1853, while governor of Utah, in his message to the legislature of that territory, advocated the building of the Pacific railroad.

People of the present day, as they are being whirled across the continent from New York to San Francisco at the rate of forty miles an hour, have but little conception of the then gigantic enterprise known as the "Overland Stage." The western terminus of the railroad then was on the eastern bank of the Missouri river, and a vast stretch of nearly 2000 miles of prairie, plains, mountains and desert intervened, across which the Concord stagecoach was the most rapid means of conveyance in the later '50's and early '60's.

The building of the Pacific road at once seemingly annihilated time and space. The long, tiresome, dusty stage ride across the plains to and from California was an event of the past. Passengers could now cross the continent in one-third of the time it formerly took by the Concord coach. The mails for the first time could be transported from the Atlantic to the Pacific several days quicker than the fastest time ever made by the pony express, which was operated more than half the distance. The new line was soon found to be indispensable to the Government, looking at it in a military point of view; for during the Indian troubles on the frontier vast bodies of troops, on short notice, could be transported to the scene of hostilities, thus not only saving valuable time but enormous sums of money, as compared with the old way of transportation before the railroad was built.

In seven years after the completion and opening of the road a special fast train was arranged to cross the continent from ocean to ocean. The train left New York *via* the Pennsylvania railroad on June 1, 1876—the year of the Centennial—and made the run through to San Francisco in 83 hours, 53 minutes. The distance traveled was 3222 miles. From New York to Council Bluffs, 1307 miles, the distance was covered in 33 hours, 6 minutes. From Council Bluffs to San Francisco, 1907 miles, the run was made in 48 hours, 28 minutes.

Among the obstacles to impede the progress on this remarkable trip were no less than three lofty mountain ranges west of the Missouri river. The speed for the entire trip, including stops, was forty miles an hour. A three hours' ride covered a longer distance than was made by the Concord overland stage-coach in twenty-four hours a decade before. One hour's ride on the "lightning" train was equal to the distance made in two days by the Mormons who settled Utah in the later '40's and by the vast army of California gold hunters who crossed the plains by oxen in the early '50's, going a considerable portion of the way over almost the identical route along which the first Pacific railway was constructed nearly twenty years later.

The generation then living, and for years eagerly watching the progress of the building of the road, will never forget that glorious day of May 10, 1869. The event was eagerly watched by the nation, for it comes but once in a lifetime. It will be remembered as a day of vast importance in history, for it closed the era of overland staging on the great central route.

In building the Kansas Pacific railroad, in the '60's, after Manhattan, Junction City and Abilene were passed, early in

April, 1867, the screech of the locomotive was heard in the new town of Salina. The next bustling camp reached was Fort Harker. Here for a short time there was great excitement in the summer. A big army of laborers was employed in the construction of the road, but operations for a while were badly demoralized by the breaking out of cholera in the camp, which made sad havoc for a few weeks, and carried off quite a number of soldiers besides many of those engaged in grading and track-laying.

Ellsworth, located a little west of Harker, was also a lively place so long as it remained the headquarters and camp of the railroad builders. It was a typical Western frontier town. Shooting scrapes were of frequent occurrence. "Another man for breakfast this morning" was common talk on the streets and in a number of frequented resorts. I well remember a dreary night I passed there once in 1867, when it was virtually the end of track on the pioneer Kansas road. The company had only a short time before laid out the new place. It was almost wholly a town of tents and small, rough, frame buildings, but one of the busiest little places I ever knew in the state. Everything appeared to be wild with excitement. There were about a hundred business houses in the town, many of them carrying on their trade in tents. All business appeared to be transacted on the high-pressure scale. It seemed as if nearly every other house in town was a drinking place, while gambling-halls and dance-houses and other questionable resorts were uncommonly numerous. Firing off guns promiscuously, and crowds filled with the vilest of liquor and yelling like wild, drunken Indians, were sounds frequently heard on the streets at all hours in nearly every direction. To sleep was an impossibility until nearly daylight, when the drunken revelry had in a measure died away. Much of the population was transient, made up largely of men who followed along with the railroad, and when the builders of the line would pull up stakes and push on to the next frontier camp, with no visible means left for support, they were compelled to

"Fold their tents like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away."

During the construction of the road I was afterwards at Hays City (near old Fort Hays) when it was the end of passenger traffic, in the fall of 1867. The track was laid some distance west of there, but only trains loaded with construction material were passing beyond. It was a town like those which preceded it farther east—made up largely of rough board shanties and tents. I do n't believe there was a painted house in the "city." Joe Clark, Willis Emery, and W. H. Bisbee, quite prominent newspaper men and job-printers, from Leavenworth, were there with the smallest size Washington hand-press, and in the 12x25 rough board shanty occupied by them had begun the publication of a weekly newspaper a little larger than a sheet of foolscap, called the *Railway Advance.* While the *Advance* was small in size, it whooped up things lively for the town, and was a sheet eagerly sought after by visitors as well as all *bona fide* residents. It was here that I first met James B. Hickok ("Wild Bill"), who was there, and had for some time previous been in the service of the Government as a scout on the frontier. I talked perhaps half an hour with him, and found him a very pleasant and affable gentleman, thoroughly familiar with the geography of that part of the West, and in conversing with him obtained much valuable information relating to that section of Kansas, as I also had gathered from Dr. W. E. Webb, stationed there for some time as agent for the Kansas Pacific railroad lands.

In the spring of 1869 the first municipal election took place in Hays, and from that time the place boasted of a city government and began to put on metropolitan airs. Hickok was chosen city marshal. He had an important task to perform. His principal duties were to stop the lawless acts that had so long been of frequent occurrence, to the detriment of the growth and standing of the place. While gamblers, highwaymen and other law-breaking persons had for some time been running things to suit themselves, they soon found that they could not ride with impunity over the orders of the newly installed brave and fearless marshal. He was selected to keep law and order and was determined to do it. Nothing of the kind had existed since the town was started. While Hickok was a quiet sort of a man, it was claimed that he had killed more than a dozen bad men on the frontier, but of all those whom he had shot, it is believed that he never killed a man except in self-defense. In the old cemetery a little west of Hays all the dead were buried until 1880. Among the various graves on the hillside of that last resting-place, it is said, upwards of eighty of them were filled by tragedies of some sort.

There was no better marksman on the frontier than Wild Bill.

Every one acquainted him knew he was a dead shot. On assuming his duties he buckled on two huge revolvers and started out. It was not his desire to bring on trouble or kill any one. One of his favorite ways in bringing a fellow to terms was clubbing with his guns. When occasion required, he could pound with ease an unruly cowboy or lawless thug until his face resembled a raw beefsteak. It was not long after he took hold until there was a decided improvement in the affairs of the town. Quiet began to reign almost from the start. Naturally many of the saloonkeepers and cowboys who had so long been running the town their own way soon became his enemies. Because they could not override his authority they secretly resolved on taking his life. In his strolls around town he steered clear of the sidewalk as far as possible, knowing he was liable at any moment to be shot down by an armed foe, who, secreted between buildings, could easily get the drop on him.

JAMES B. HICKOK,
("Wild Bill.")
Photo. in the later '60's.

Wild Bill was one of the early characters in Hays City. "In physique," according to a writer in the St. Louis *Republic*, "he was as perfect a specimen of manhood as ever walked in moccasins or wore a pair of cavalry boots—and Bill was a dandy at times in attire, a regular frontier dude. He stood about six feet two inches tall, had a lithe waist and loins, broad shoulders, small feet, bony and supple hands with tapering fingers, quick to feel the cards or pull the trigger of a revolver. His hair was auburn in hue, of the tint brightened but not reddened by the sunlight. He had a clean, clear-cut face, clean shaven, except a thin, drooping, sandy-brown mustache, which he wore and twirled with no success even in getting an upward twist at either end. Brown haired as he was, he had clear, gray eyes. He had a splendid countenance, amiable in look, but firm withal. His luxuriant growth of hair fell in ringlets over his shoulders. There was nothing in his appearance to betoken the dead shot and frequent murderer, except his tread. He walked like a tiger, and, aroused, he was as ferocious and pitiless as one."

It was not long after his arrival until he had put himself on record as one in every way built to protect himself. He had already achieved a reputation, having followed the Kansas Pacific and seen almost every mile of the road built west from Manhattan. He had won considerable notoriety for "killing a man," having been a Government scout in the Arkansas valley during the war, while along the line of railroad he was known as "the Slade of western Kansas." His first exploit at Hays witnessed by the *Republic* correspondent was "a double shot—a right-and-left fusilade," concerning which the writer said:

"Two men came out of a saloon and walked toward the newly built depot surrounded by a raised platform. Each man had a pistol drawn, when suddenly from a group of four or five 'crack! crack!' went two pistol shots, and Wild Bill stood on the edge of the platform with smoking, bone-handled revolvers in each hand, and the two men who had been approaching the platform were seen to totter, stumble forward, and fall. Death was instantaneous in each case, as if Jove had hurled a bolt at the men. A row over cards the night before caused the double death, and a double funeral as soon as the corpses could be prepared for interment.

"It was only a few months after the obsequies following the demise of the two gentlemen whose taking off has just been rerecorded that Wild Bill came near furnishing, in his own person, the subject for a 'first-class funeral.' He was sauntering west on Front street (traversed by the railroad) when, near the corner of Fort street (the avenue leading toward Fort Hays), a small man, an Irishman, of the name of Sullivan, jumped out in front of Bill with a cocked revolver, exclaiming: 'I have got you! Hold up your hands. I am going to kill you, you —— ——.' Up went Bill's hands, Sullivan having 'the drop' on him. Sullivan then started into a gloating dissertation about killing him, while Bill stood before him as rigid as the Apollo Belvedere. Opening his eyes wide and frowning, Bill in a few moments uttered in an expostulatory tone, looking over Sullivan's head: 'For God's sake, don't stab the man in the back. Give him a chance for his life.' Sullivan turned to see his enemy in the rear—and his funeral came off the next day. Strange to say, several years after the death of Sullivan, Wild Bill 'died with his boots on,' in Wyoming, while at a game of cards."

Wild Bill was marshal of Abilene when that town was the shipping point for the cattlemen of north Texas and the Indian Territory. His most desperate encounter with the rough characters of the border is graphically described in an article written by Col. Ed. C. Little, and printed in a recent number of *Everybody's Magazine*, as follows:

"It was about this time that big Phil. Coe, keeping faith with his comrades, but with no eager avidity, leisurely walked up in front of the Alamo,* then packed with excited men, and fired his pistol at a dog, as he claimed. Wild Bill told Williams to stay at the Novelty,* ran swiftly across to the rear door, sprang into the crowded Alamo, roughly inquiring as to who was doing this shooting. In terse and vigorous language he talked to Dunbar, of the Alamo, roundly denouncing the whole business. He declared that the cowboys had promised him there should be no shooting if he allowed this one last round-up. Coe stood at the well-curb outside as all this passed very quickly, and in response to Bill's second inquiry said that he fired the shot. Immediately he fired another, which grazed Wild Bill's side as he stood at the bar. With that wonderful swiftness which stood him in good stead so many times, Bill threw two guns on Coe, shot him twice in the abdomen, exclaiming, 'I've shot too low!' At the same instant, he turned and fired twice at another man, who came running down the dark sidewalk from the north and burst on the scene shoving two pistols in front of him. Coe fired one more shot and fell across the well-curb. A hundred guns clicked as Wild Bill fired his first shot, but before he had fired his fourth the room was cleared, and not one bad man was left to stand by Coe. The stranger, with two bullets within an inch of his heart, threw both hands in the air, dropped his pistols to the floor, and pitched forward stone-dead. It was Mike Williams, the deputy, a brave fellow, who, despite his chief's instructions to stay at the Novelty, could not keep away from the fight. Wild Bill cried out that he had killed his best friend, gathered the little man in his arms, and with his eyes full of tears laid him across a poker table. Long years of combat had so little deadened his sensibilities that the next day I saw his face still pinched and white as a sheet over this death of his friend, the last man he ever killed. But the fury that burned in his veins when he whipped the McCandlas gang sprang to life again at this accident, and he proceeded to hold the Texas men responsible. That night the desperate heroes of border strife hid in cellars and sunflower patches, or on swift ponies found their way to their cattle camps."

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*The Alamo and Novelty were two saloons.

The party of Vice-president Wilson was guided over the West by Wild Bill. The following is the letter opening the correspondence which led to his engagement:

"WASHINGTON, D. C., May 17, 1869.

"*James B. Hickok, Esq.:* DEAR SIR—A party consisting of several gentlemen, ladies and myself desire to spend a few weeks in the far West during the warm season, and I hope it will be our fortune to secure your excellent services as guide. I have heard much concerning your wonderful exploits in the West, and of such a character, too, as commend you highly for efficiency in the scouting service of the Government. If it be possible for you to accompany our party as guide sometime during the following month, please write me at once, at Willard's hotel, Washington, indicating what compensation you will expect, and also from what point in Kansas we had best start on the tour. I shall leave to you the selection of a pleasant route, as your general acquaintance with the places of interest between the Missouri river and Rocky Mountains better qualify you for deciding the trip that promises the most attractions.

"Hoping to hear from you at your earliest convenience,

"I am, yours truly, HENRY WILSON."

Following is the closing part of the last letter Wild Bill wrote to his wife:

"*Agnes, darling:* If such should be that we never meet again, while firing my last shot I will gently breathe the name of my wife—my Agnes—and, with a kind wish even for my enemies, I will make the plunge and try to swim to the other shore."

At the head of Wild Bill's grave was a large stump, and upon this was rudely carved the following:

A BRAVE MAN, THE VICTIM OF AN ASSASSIN,
J. B. HICKOK (WILD BILL), AGED 48 YEARS;*
MURDERED BY JACK McCALL,
AUGUST 2, 1876.

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*At the time of his death Wild Bill's age was 39 years, 10 months, and 12 days.

CHAPTER VII.

EXCITEMENT OVER PIKE'S PEAK GOLD DISCOVERY.

THE lapse of a decade from the later '40's demonstrated beyond all doubt that vast quantities of gold abounded in various sections of California. In the territorial days of 1857, it was the belief of some of the pioneers of Kansas—a few of whom had been on the Pacific coast—that the precious metal also existed on the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains, in the section then known as the "Pike's Peak" region, the western border of Kansas then extending to the back-bone of the continent.

The advice of Greeley, "Go west, young man, go west, and grow up with the country," led to the organization and fitting out of a company of prospectors numbering twenty men at Lawrence, K. T., in the spring of 1858. The company arranged all preliminaries, and, on the morning of May 27, 1858, set out with their faces toward the setting sun. When in camp about twenty miles out they elected a man named G. W. Smith as captain.

The long journey across the plains accomplished, the party at once learned that the first discovery of so-called Pike's Peak gold, in a limited quantity, had already been made in the bed of Cherry creek. The new findings, however, were nearly 100 miles distant—a little east of north—from the noted peak discovered by Zebulon M. Pike in 1806, with its summit towering to a height of over 14,000 feet above sea-level.

Although there was no telegraph line in 1858 nearer the new diggings than 800 miles, the news of the gold find was soon wafted eastward across the plains of Kansas and Nebraska. Wm. N. Byers, of the *Rocky Mountain News*, carried the intelligence to Omaha. Like wild-fire, the tidings naturally spread to all the Missouri river outfitting points. When the reports had gone as far east as the Mississippi, the magnitude of the "discoveries" had kept steadily increasing. They continued to grow larger, and on reaching Iowa, Illinois, Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky they had been magnified until some of them were simply fabulous.

The first settlement at the Pike's Peak mines was called Montana. Early that fall—1858—a few months after the arrival of the first prospecting party, the city of Auraria, embracing a tract of 1200 acres, was laid out on the west bank of Cherry creek. A hotel, stores and shops were shortly opened and the new town grew slowly but steadily into prominence. St. Charles, another and rival town, on west bank of Cherry creek, was also started. In November the Denver Town Company was organized. The following spring the pioneer newspaper—the *Rocky Mountain News*—was started by William N. Byers, but it was in the old, original town of Auraria. It was only a short time until the name of St. Charles had been displaced by its ambitious rival, Denver City, on the east side of the creek, opposite Auraria—named as a compliment to Hon. James W. Denver,

GEORGE A. JACKSON.
The first man to pan gold out of Cherry creek, Colorado, in 1858.

GEORGE A. JACKSON was one of the pioneers of Colorado. He was on the plains and in the Rockies with Kit Carson and other noted hunters and trappers in the '40's. He was a native of Glasgow, Mo., but was early on the Pacific coast, going to California soon after the discovery of gold near Placerville, and returning to his native home in 1857. The next spring he turned up in the Pike's Peak region, going there early with a stock of Indian goods, which he carried into Auraria. He was the discoverer of gold at the "Jackson diggings," near Idaho Springs, in the later '50's, having panned out the first gold in the Pike's Peak region. After disposing of his goods he settled on the Cache la Poudre, where he prospected for the yellow metal and founded a trading post, which he christened Laporte. He also prospected about St. Vrain and Vasques Fork. Later he established winter quarters with Tom Golden and Jim Sanders at the eastern base of the mountains, where Golden is now located. He prospected in a number of places along the tributaries of the South Platte. In one place he made a big fire of brush and logs to thaw out the frozen ground, using a tin cup (for the want of a pan) in washing out the gold. The following spring he returned with a party of twenty-two men for prosecuting work in his new discoveries. Being without lumber, the party were obliged to convert their wagon-boxes into sluices. After seven days' work, the first cleaning up netted $1900 for the party. Jackson was well known all over Colorado and greatly esteemed in its early days. He had carried a rifle on the frontier for forty years, but finally became a victim of his own carelessness. While coming to Denver from a mining camp in eastern Utah, a few years ago, he was shot dead by the accidental discharge of his gun.

then territorial governor of Kansas. All eastern Colorado was then a part of Kansas Territory.

It was the universal remark that nearly all who went out on the plains in the later '50's and early '60's had "gone to Pike's Peak." Thousands of men, attracted by the glowing reports of vast quantities of gold at the new mines, fitted out at the prominent Missouri river towns—Kansas City, Leavenworth, Atchison, St. Joseph, Nebraska City, and Omaha—and started for the new "diggings." Nearly all of the roads that led out over the prairies and on the plains united at or near Fort Kearney, and from that point west the great overland military thoroughfare along the south bank of the Platte was lined with a busy, moving throng of people, representing a score or more of states, having in their charge various descriptions of vehicles. It was not long, however, until large numbers, thoroughly disgusted with the situation, began to return. Some backed out before they had gone 100 miles from the Missouri river. Some turned back when within a few miles of Denver. The most of them, on reaching their destination, became wiser and poorer because they were disappointed in not being able to pick up gold nuggets at every step taken. Some of them were mad. They had now begun to realize the truthfulness of the adage, "All 's not gold that glitters"; the reports had all glittered.

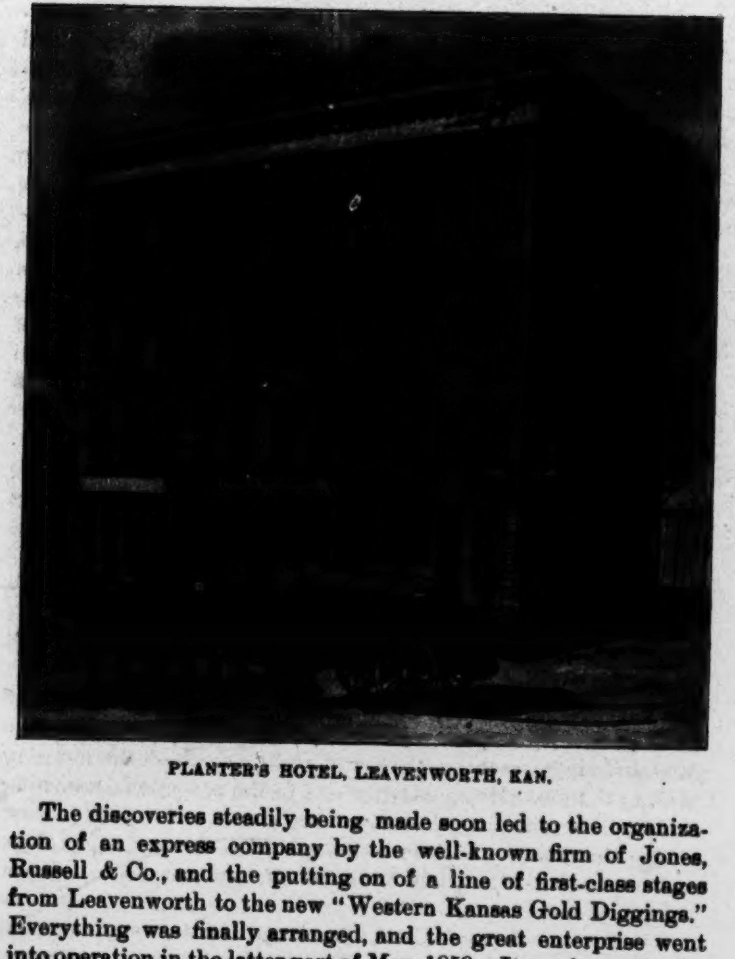
The new diggings were variously known as the "Pike's Peak Gold Mines," the "Cherry Creek Gold Diggings," the "Gregory Gold Diggings," and the "Gold Fields of Western Kansas." The news of the discoveries—often so largely magnified that they had become fabulous — continued to spread rapidly all over the country, and anxious gold seekers soon began fitting out and flocking to the new El Dorado. As steadily as the sun rose and set, so steadily the gold fever continued to increase.

Comparatively few dared to venture across in the winter, but in the spring of 1859 the immense rush began, and for months the road across the plains was fairly lined with white-covered wagons—nine out of ten of the people accompanying them destined for the new "Pike's Peak Mines." Those in search of the "precious stuff" went across with all kinds of vehicles, not a few pushing their effects in hand-carts and wheelbarrows. Quite a number started out with packs on their backs. It was plain that the "fever" was raging at its highest pitch.

Being the first prominent town laid out, it was quite natural that Auraria should get the start of Denver and grow into importance, and become a leading outfitting point for prospecting parties going into the mountains. Both places, however, were then in Arapahoe county, Kansas Territory, and both grew and prospered. Denver was rapidly getting to the front, but it was more a "city" of tents than of buildings, owing to the difficulty at first experienced in getting lumber, because of the scarcity of sawmills in the region known as "Pike's Peak."

The place had a number of natural advantages not possessed by its senior rival on the west bank of Cherry creek. It was located on higher ground; hence was believed by many to be a more healthy and desirable place for residences. It also had a more commanding view of the surrounding country. Naturally a strong rivalry between the places was the result. As time passed it finally became evident that two large cities, each ambitious and striving to outdo the other, could not be built up so close together. Recognizing the fact that "in union there is strength," the projectors of the rival towns had a consultation. They held a mass meeting in March, 1860, and decided to consolidate. When the matter was settled Auraria was then called "Denver City, west division," and from that time on the consolidated young city under the shadow of the grand old Rockies took on a new lease of life and grew as if by magic. Representatives of outside capital who hitherto had hesitated about putting money in either place had no fears thereafter of investing in the prospective "Magic City of the Plains."

The excitement and the rapid growth of Denver, occasioned by the existence of gold, which was being panned out in fair quantities almost at its very doors, naturally suggested that there ought to be a more rapid and better means of communication between the new mining region and the outfitting towns on the Missouri river, whence it was necessary for the mining people to draw their supplies. Leavenworth enjoyed a big name and was then the great commercial metropolis of Kansas, and Atchison was the second-best town. St. Joseph, having railroad connection with the east, was the most prominent point in western Missouri. Kansas City, without a railroad, was forging to the front as a commercial center, but it was far behind Leavenworth and St. Joseph, except that it enjoyed most of the Santa Fé trade.



PLANTER'S HOTEL, LEAVENWORTH, KAN.

The discoveries steadily being made soon led to the organization of an express company by the well-known firm of Jones, Russell & Co., and the putting on of a line of first-class stages from Leavenworth to the new "Western Kansas Gold Diggings." Everything was finally arranged, and the great enterprise went into operation in the latter part of May, 1859. It was known as the "Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express." The line was equipped with over fifty Concord coaches, built by the Abbot-Downing Company, of Concord, N. H., the most popular and substantial vehicles of the kind made.

I saw all the coaches at Leavenworth a few days after their arrival in Kansas direct from the manufactory in the "Old Granite State." They were brought up the Missouri river by steamboat and were unloaded on the levee, between Shawnee and Choctaw streets. At that time the western terminus of the Missouri Pacific railroad was nearly 200 miles away from Kansas' eastern border. These stages were the first Concord coaches shipped to Kansas. Nearly 800 mules were purchased for the line, and, with the coaches, were soon strung out over the route at the various stations all the way to the mountains.

The first stage to arrive from Denver, drawn by four mules, was on May 21, 1859. It was a proud day for the great Western outfitting point and there was much rejoicing by its enthusiastic citizens. A large and anxious crowd soon gathered in front of the Planter's hotel, eager to learn everything. The *Times* and *Herald* both published full particulars, and hundreds of copies were sold. The express vehicle bore a decoration which read: "The gold mountains of Kansas send greetings to her commercial metropolis." A coach dispatched a short distance out to escort it into the city bore a banner labeled "Leavenworth hears the echo from her mineral mountains and sends it on the wings of lightning to a listening world."

Albert D. Richardson was one of the early passengers west by the new line. He left Leavenworth four days after the first coach came in from the mines. He was the solitary passenger until Manhattan was reached, when he was joined by Horace Greeley, and, together, they occupied the stage by themselves all the way to Denver. Richardson was eleven days on the road from the Missouri river, reaching Denver at eight o'clock on the morning of June 6, 1859. He spent six weeks in the new mines, returning in July, and reporting that there was then over $100,000 in dust among the miners. He came through from Denver in six days and ten hours, at that time the quickest trip ever made between the two places.

The stages at first left Leavenworth and Denver every morning, the schedule time through being ten days—considered a remarkably quick trip across the plains in the pioneer days of Kansas. The fare was $125, with way tariff twenty-five cents a mile. Each passenger was allowed twenty-five pounds of baggage. As first laid out and traveled, the length of the stage route was 687 miles; however, this distance was afterward shortened a few miles.

The expense of operating the line was approximately $1000 a day. The company did quite a business at first carrying express packages at one dollar a pound; and, on some trips, as many as 1000 letters, placed in Government stamped envelopes, were carried at "two bits" each. The stations, of which there were twenty-seven—established about twenty-five miles apart—were numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, and on up. Six men were placed at most of the stations—four drivers, and two to remain permanently at the station; the entire force being 108 men.

This line was equipped early in May. While the first coach to arrive from the new "Western Kansas Gold Diggings" did not bring a very large sum of the precious dust, there was enough of it brought in and exhibited on the streets at Leavenworth to convince the excited public of the certain existence of gold in western Kansas. The route over which the stages ran westward followed the old Government road from Ft. Leavenworth through Easton, Osawkee, and Hickory Point—all pioneer historic places in Kansas during its trying territorial days. Thence it went west over the rolling prairie to near the head waters of Indian creek—some sixty miles from the Missouri river—within a few rods of the historic cabin built by Gen. W. T. Sherman (when he resided in Kansas in the later '50's), five miles northeast of Topeka. The road entered the Kansas (or Kaw) River valley and crossed Soldier creek near Indianola—a prominent town in those days—two miles northwest of Topeka. It was near this old town of Indianola that Col. John C. Fremont crossed the Kaw river when he made one of his overland exploring journeys, more than half a century ago. From Topeka the road followed west up the north bank of the Kaw river *via* Silver Lake, St. Mary's, and Louisville, crossing the Blue river at Manhattan, and continuing up

GENERAL SHERMAN'S CABIN.
Near Topeka. Built in 1858.
Photo. 1891.

the Kaw to Fort Riley and Junction City—the latter on the outskirts of civilization—at the confluence of the Republican and Smoky Hill rivers. The road thence continued westward up the divide between the Republican and Solomon rivers, and across to the upper branches of the Republican, over to the branches of the Platte, in sight of the Rockies; thence across the barren plains to its destination near the eastern base of the mountains, striking Cherry creek a few miles southwest above Denver.

The Jones-Russell enterprise was a gigantic undertaking in its day. In starting out they ran their stages in pairs. This was not done so much to meet the great demand for traffic to the new Western mines as it was to afford protection against marauding bands of Indians along a considerable portion of the route.

It cost a vast fortune to open up and stock the new route. The company spent something near a quarter of a million dollars in their preliminaries, equipment, and in completing arrangements, before turning a wheel. The stages were drawn by four mules. It was the belief at that time that mules were the only animals that could successfully traverse the region known as the "Great American Desert" and make the journey on schedule time.

On the first two coaches that arrived in Denver were nine passengers. Henry Villard, of the Cincinnati *Commercial*, was one of the prominent journalists, in addition to the *Tribune* philosopher, and Richardson, who represented the Boston *Journal*. For the two years previous Richardson had been the Kansas correspondent of nearly half a dozen other leading Eastern newspapers, and was widely known as an experienced journalist. Free transportation was furnished by the stage company, and the Jones-Russell line was given a handsome send-off by this trio of leading journalists, who went out to examine and make a report on the new "Gold Mines of Western Kansas." The former wrote a series of letters while in the stage-coach *en route*, giving an interesting description of the long and tedious trip. He also wrote of his visit to the mines, and the several letters were published in the New York *Tribune*, and some time afterward in a book, under the title of "An Overland Journey."

Owing to the scarcity of fuel and water in the arid region west beyond the Republican and Solomon rivers, and the fact that Indian depredations were frequently being committed along the route, early in July—only a few weeks after the "Express" went into operation—a change was decided upon. The stock and coaches were moved north onto the Platte, and the stages thereafter, as long as the line was operated by its original projectors, made trips only once a week. A daily stage line without a mail contract could not be made to pay, and there were no settlements on the frontier.

John S. Jones, of Pettis county, Missouri, was general manager of the express line, his office being located in the basement of the old Planter's Hotel, in Leavenworth, at the northeast corner of Shawnee and Main streets. While Jones was a first-class man, with some capital and large business experience, it was alleged that he was not a practical stage man, and poorly fitted for the responsible position he occupied.

Shortly after the line was changed to the Platte route, stations were built at frequent intervals, with stables adjacent capable of holding two four-mule teams. At a number of places there were ranches and traders on the route at convenient distances, and arrangements were made at some of these for keeping the stage stock, the drivers, and other employees.

The Platte route having been given a thorough trial, and there being no perceptible improvement in the management of the line as time passed by, Jones was followed as superintendent by Beverly D. Williams, a Kentuckian, who was elected delegate to Congress from the Territory of Jefferson (now Colorado) in the fall of 1859. Even with a "congressman" elect at the head of the great enterprise as manager, matters did not improve very much or even make the express line a paying enterprise. It continued to run at a loss until finally it became necessary to make another change, and Benjamin F. Ficklin was placed in charge in the spring of 1860.

It took only a short time to find out that Ficklin was the kind of a man whose services the company had long needed. He was a gentleman of great experience in the stage and express business, and he was not long in putting the line in first-class order and on a more substantial basis. He was a Virginian—a man of indomitable courage and decided force of character. On taking possession as superintendent of the line he found it in a terribly demoralized condition. Nearly everything connected with it appeared to be in a chaotic state. Apparently there was no limit to the bad characters in the employ of the company. To the new

LEAVENWORTH & PIKE'S PEAK EXPRESS, AT MILNE HOUSE, INDIANOLA.

manager it looked as though all the thieves in creation had congregated along the route and were systematically preying upon the company's property.

But Ben. Ficklin was now master of the situation, and he at once proved to be a man in every particular equal to the existing emergency. He went to work at the hazardous and apparently endless task of making a general "cleaning up." The work of driving out the thieves at the earliest practicable moment and placing the line in a paying condition he considered of the utmost importance, and his first duty to the company. He did this work in the shortest time possible, and he did it most effectually. Ficklin was a warm friend of the boys employed on the express line and they all fairly worshiped him. He remained in the service of the company until the close of 1861, when, after the civil war had been raging nearly a year, he went South to his former home and enlisted in the service of the "lost cause." He did not go, however, until he had greatly improved the stage line and left it in a fairly prosperous condition.

Forty years have elapsed since the pioneer stage and express line between the Missouri river and Denver was put in operation. It was one of the great undertakings of the day in Kansas, in the later '50's. Every member of the firm of Jones, Russell & Co., who organized the line, has long been dead. During the period this firm operated that important stage line their enterprise was widely known, particularly west of the Missouri river, the firm name on the plains at that time being almost as familiar as household words.

A few months after the old express line had been changed from its original route *via* Manhattan and Junction City over to the Platte, it became necessary to make another still more important change. The route finally taken—although several miles longer, and believed to be the only natural stage route across the plains north of the Santa Fé trail—was the old military road from Fort Leavenworth, which the road from Atchison west intersected three or four miles out, at a point known as "Mormon Grove." It was not long thereafter until the stages from Leavenworth ran direct *via* Atchison to Kennekuk, Seneca, Marysville; thence northwesterly up the Little Blue valley through southern Nebraska, and across the divide to the Platte. Thence it is a water grade most of the way to the Rocky Mountains.

A good road had long been laid out west from St. Joseph, Mo., intersecting the Fort Leavenworth Government highway at Kennekuk, at the east line of the Kickapoo Indian reservation, thirty-five miles a little south of west from St. Joseph, but only twenty-four miles due west on the "Parallel" road from Atchison. It was inevitable from the first that Atchison, from its decidedly favorable location, should become the starting-point for the overland stages. One important point in its favor was that it was on the great western bend of the Missouri river and was a dozen or more miles farther west than any other prominent town in eastern Kansas. Another point was that it enjoyed the advantage of being connected with the East by rail, and had one of the best landings on the Missouri river.

CHAPTER VIII.

ON THE EARLY HISTORY OF COLORADO.

IN the early history of Colorado the name of the territory was Jefferson. An organization was effected on the 3d of October, 1859, and a constitution drafted for a state. This was the first government with authority. It existed one year without law. On the first Monday in November, 1859, the first territorial legislature met, and continued in session one month. Hon. Beverly D. Williams, now of Little Rock, Ark., was the first delegate elected to Congress from the Territory of Jefferson. On the 26th of February, 1861, Congress made it a territory, and, of the half-dozen or more names suggested for it, gave it the name of Colorado. In organizing under the name of Jefferson, there was strong opposition in Congress, on account of a decision not to name territories for the Presidents—one of the principal reasons being that there were "not enough to go round." It was March 4, just six days after it was named Colorado, before the news reached Denver.

Hon. William Gilpin was the first territorial governor of Colorado, appointed by President Lincoln early in the spring of 1861. On the 29th of May following, Governor Gilpin reached Denver. Almost the first thing he did after his arrival in the territory was to order a census taken, the result of which showed a population of 25,329 souls, as follows: White males over twenty-one years, 18,136; white males under twenty-one years, 2622; females, 4484; negroes, 89.

In the Denver market, during the winter of 1863-'64, flour and corn-meal sold at twelve dollars per hundred; buckwheat flour, fifteen dollars; potatoes, six dollars per bushel; butter, eighty cents per pound; eggs, one dollar per dozen; and almost everything else in the way of eatables sold at corresponding prices. Wood brought twelve dollars per cord. Notwithstanding the times were reported extremely hard that memorable winter, two theaters continued business in the city, being well patronized; they occasionally gave a "benefit" for the poor and needy.

In the spring of 1864, being hungry for fresh fruit, and noticing some apples at one of the stores in Denver that looked tempting, I bought a couple, for which I paid twenty-five cents each. They were Missouri Pippins, a wagon-load of them having been hauled by a farmer from Buchanan county, Missouri, about 700 miles across the plains, to the metropolis of the new gold region. The apples quickly found a market, and they netted the freighter a very handsome profit.

At Latham station, sixty miles below Denver, on the South Platte, I bought, a few months afterward, one dozen extra-choice apricots, that were brought from Salt Lake, 600 miles across the Rockies by overland stage express, for which I paid three dollars in greenbacks, and thought at the time I was getting a bargain.

The only wild fruit I ate in the summer of 1864 while in Colorado were some choke-cherries I gathered among the foot-hills, almost under the shadow of Long's Peak, and a few strawberries I picked along the Cache la Poudre near the base of the mountains. The fruits were a rich treat in those early days, because it was then impossible to obtain any such luxuries from the States.

The canned fruits now so common all over the country were almost unknown on the plains in the early '60's. The finest dried fruits we had at Latham station the latter part of 1863 and for over nine months in 1864 were peaches, grown, dried at and brought from Salt Lake. While they cost fully twice as much as the kind that came from the East, they were well worth it, for they were as much superior in flavor to the Eastern dried peach as the latter in every way excels the gnarliest dried apple.

In 1859, that memorable year of the Pike's Peak gold excitement, it is estimated that not less than 150,000 men started from various points on the Missouri river across the plains, attracted by the reports of fabulous discoveries in the new El Dorado. Probably as many as one-half of those who started out turned back, utterly discouraged, after meeting so many who had become dissatisfied and brought all sorts of evil reports. Not more than one person in ten who made the overland trip to the new gold fields in the later '50's remained there. Many of those who went out poor and remained long since became wealthy, and are among the leading and most prosperous citizens of the Centennial state.

In the spring and summer of 1860 there was an unprecedented rush of people to Denver. In the month of May that year, it was estimated that in the mad rush there were upwards of 10,000 vehicles of various kinds on the plains in the Platte valley, destined for the new "Pike's Peak" or "Cherry Creek" gold camp.

Henry M. Porter, who was engaged in banking at Atchison in the '60's, and is now a resident of Denver, built the telegraph line from Nebraska City to Omaha, and later as far west as Fort Kearney, in the spring of 1861. Edward Creighton was president of the company.

Denver's first telegraph office was opened on October 10, 1863. The line was a branch of the Pacific telegraph, having been built into the city from old Julesburg west to its destination along the south bank of the south fork of the Platte as far as Junction, near Bijou; then for about ninety miles it followed the toll-road known as the "cut-off," from ten to twenty miles south of the Platte. The Pacific Telegraph Company was merged into the Western Union in 1865.

The first telegraph line into New Mexico was organized in the fall of 1867, and built from Denver south to Santa Fé in the spring of 1868. The following fall the line was extended north from Denver to Cheyenne.

In the early part of 1861, the tariff rate on the Pike's Peak Express between the Missouri river and Denver was as follows: On 100 pounds or less, forty cents per pound. On and after the first of July, 1861, the charges on express freight by the C. O. C. & P. P. Express Company from Leavenworth and St. Joseph were as follows:

To Denver	Under 100 pounds	50c	per lb.
	100 pounds and over	40c	"
To Fort Kearney	10 pounds and under 100 pounds	40c	"
	100 pounds and over	30c	"
To Fort Laramie	Under 100 pounds	50c	"
	100 pounds and over	30c	"
To Salt Lake City	10 pounds and under 50 pounds	75c	"
	50 pounds and over	60c	"

The first Concord stage-coach to enter Denver* was over the route of the Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express; it arrived on the 7th of May, 1859. Time through, ten days; fare, $125. A large number of letters, enclosed in prepaid Government envelopes, were carried as express matter, on which the charges were twenty-five cents each. The distance, as traveled by the express, was 687 miles. On the route there were over fifty of these celebrated coaches, made by the Abbot-Downing Company, of Concord, N. H.

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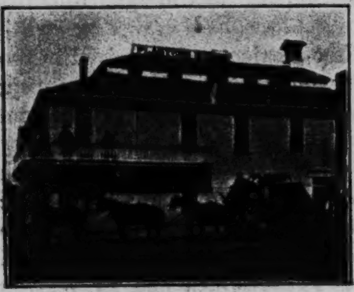
*In his autobiography, entitled "Seventy Years on the Frontier," Alexander Majors says: "It is a fact, which I believe has never yet been published, that the last stage-coach of the great 'Overland' line was dispatched from the town of Brighton to Denver; thus associating its name with an act, insignificant in itself, but far-reaching in its importance, when it is remembered that the act marked the end of our pioneer period and ushered in the new growth of the railroad era."

The great flood in Cherry creek, May 19, 1864, was quite disastrous to early Denver. Property belonging to hundreds of people was destroyed. Among the losses were the city hall with all its contents — safe, records, and all; the *Rocky Mountain News* plant, a total loss—not a single article, including half a dozen presses, was ever found. The new Methodist church, built of adobe bricks—the foundation resting in the bed of the dry creek instead of on rock, according to Scripture—melted and was washed away like sand. There was a decided contrast in the buildings of the *Rocky Mountain News* and the Methodist church, although it appears both were somewhat alike regarding the chosen location. The *News* structure was a frame, the church adobe. But neither house was built according to the injunction so plainly laid down in the Scriptures. The foundations of both were placed in the (at that time) dry, sandy bed of Cherry creek, instead of "on a rock." The terrible flood came almost in a twinkling, on the night of May 19, 1864; several feet of water with a mighty rush came down the valley; both structures were crushed like egg-shells, not the slightest remnant of either having ever been found. A large number of other buildings of various kinds were swept down the raging torrent. The loss was estimated at hundreds of thousands of dollars, and a number of lives.



Office of the Overland Stage Line at Denver, 1863.*

The latter part of December, 1864, was a period of extreme severity. There were terrific winds, accompanied by furious blizzards. It was a winter of intense cold and great suffering and almost constant uneasiness. To add to the hardships, practically no rest was given by the Indians. Six companies of cavalry were called for by the governor to serve on the plains. As a result, flour and nearly all kinds of provisions were high and scarce. In Denver a panic was narrowly averted. A load of salt sold at $100 a barrel. Hay and grain were scarce and hundreds of head of stock perished. Labor was four to six dollars a day.

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*By permission of the Denver History Company.

In the spring of 1865, when I made my last trip across the plains on the stage-coach, provisions in Denver had gone up to almost fabulous prices. Flour sold for $15 to $20 per hundred; potatoes, $15 per bushel; corn, $10 per bushel; beef, 40 cents per pound; hams, 45 to 50 cents per pound; eggs, $1.25 to $1.50 per dozen; and nearly everything else in the eating line in proportion. The price of a meal at the stations of the stage company down the Platte—no better than some of the fifteen-cent meals gotten up to-day—was $1.50 to $2. East of Denver, down the South Platte, hay sold to the freighters at $100 a ton; wood was scarce at $75 a cord; lumber could not be purchased short of $150 to $200 per thousand feet; and, for a wagon and team (five yoke of oxen), $25 a day was the price charged.

As early as 1866 the commerce of the plains had grown to gigantic proportions. To illustrate the value of Colorado transportation, it was shown that the shipments—taken from the report of a committee appointed at a railroad meeting favoring the route of the Union Pacific railway *via* Denver and through Berthoud Pass and over Gen. Bela M. Hughes's route, thence to Salt Lake—exceeded 100 million pounds; and that, for three years previous, the average cost of transportation had been ten cents per pound, making a total cost to the Territory of Colorado and the Government of over ten million dollars.

In the summer of 1866, the Union Pacific railway having been completed from Omaha west as far as Fort Kearney, Neb. (but on the north side of the Platte), that part of the stage route between Atchison and the old military post was abandoned for staging, and the coaches and some of the stock were shortly thereafter transferred to the route west of Fort Kearney and the balance to the Smoky Hill route, some distance to the south. After that the mail from Kansas and Missouri destined for Colorado was carried from Junction City, the western terminus of the Kansas branch of the Union Pacific. The stage line, however, soon fell into the control of Wells, Fargo & Co., but, for reasons best known to themselves, was operated for some time by the United States Express Company.

In the *Missouri Democrat*, St. Louis, August 7, 1866, appeared the following:

> "IMPORTANT MAIL CONTRACT.—We learn that Mr. George K. Otis, secretary, and Mr. David Street, superintendent, of Holladay's Overland Mail and Express Route, are at present in the city with a view to perfect arrangements with the Missouri Pacific and Union Pacific (E. D.) railroads for transporting the overland mail over those roads. The preliminaries, we believe, are already settled, and it is expected the new line will be in operation in the course of the next fifteen days. The mails will be carried by rail *via* Kansas City and Leavenworth by the Smoky Hill route through to Denver, and thence to Salt Lake and San Francisco. The schedule time from St. Louis to Denver will be five days."

A reduced *facsimile* of one of the United States Express Company's table of distances is printed on opposite page.

A little over a decade following the early days of overland staging, the first railway-train to reach Denver came down from Cheyenne, over the Denver Pacific, a branch of the Union Pacific road, on June 22, 1870. There was great rejoicing over the event of celebrating the completion of the road, the last rail being fastened down by Governor Evans, who drove a silver spike contributed by the mountain neighborhood city of Georgetown. Everybody in Colorado who could get to Denver was present at the great celebration and witnessed the festivities. It was a grand Rocky Mountain holiday. The day was particularly pleasant to the old-timers who, a decade or more before, had crossed the plains from the Missouri river with ox and mule teams, a distance of nearly 700 miles, a number having walked the entire distance—being a month or more on the way—encountering all kinds of weather, camping along the route, when there was hardly a settlement, and only an occasional ranch or hamlet to break the monotony between the "Big Muddy" and the Rockies. The sounds heard in Denver after the railroad reached there were much more pleasant to the ears of the average citizen. Instead of listening to bellowing oxen and braying mules, it was now the shrill whistle of the locomotive; a very agreeable change to old-timers, who had been long on the plains in charge of trains or whacking mules or oxen. The iron horse had come to stay; the ox was converted into beef; the mule and donkey transferred to other pastures.

UNITED STATES
Express Company
(DENVER DIVISION.)

EXPRESS FORWARDERS TO ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD

And Carriers' of the Great Overland Mail, via Missouri Pacific, Union Pacific Railways and Smoky Hill.

TABLE OF DISTANCES
From Junction City to Denver.

	MILES.	
	Between Stations.	Total.
Chapman's Creek	12	..
Aberline City	13	25
*SOLOMON	10	35
Owens	10	45
Spring Creek	13	58
Rocky Ranch	14	72
Ellsworth	10	82
Buffalo Creek	10	92
*WILSON'S CREEK	9	101
Bunker Hill	8	109
Fossil Creek	8	117
Walker's Creek	10	127
*BIG CREEK	12	139
Look Out	9	148
Stormy Hollow	12	160
White Rock	11	171
*DOWNER	10	181
Castle Rock	11	192
Grinnell Springs	8	200
Chalk Bluffs	13	213
Carlyle Hall	8	221
*MONUMENT	10	231

	MILES.	
	Between Stations.	Total.
Smoky Hill	12	243
Russell Springs	10	253
Henshaw Springs	14	267
*POND CREEK	11	278
Goose Creek	11	289
Big Timber	10	299
*CHEYENNE WELLS	15	314
Deering's Wells	13	327
*BIG SPRINGS	13	340
David's Wells	10	350
Hugo Springs	10	360
Willow Springs	13	373
*LAKE STATION	11	384
Cedar Point	9	393
Fairmount	8	401
Benham Springs	9	410
*BIJOU SPRINGS	11	421
Kiowa	10	431
Box Elder	12	443
Toll Gate	12	455
DENVER	10	465

** Home or eating stations.*

COACHES LEAVE THE TERMINUS OF THE UNION PACIFIC RAILWAY DAILY.

☞ **Each adult passenger is allowed 25 lbs. of baggage, but neither Gold Dust, Bullion, Coin, Bank or Treasury Notes will be carried under designation of Baggage.**

A. H. BARNEY, President,
82 BROADWAY, NEW YORK.

W. H. COTTRILL, Superintendent,
500 NORTH FOURTH STREET, ST. LOUIS, MO.

CLARKE, EMERY & CO., Book and Job Printers, Leavenworth, Kansas.

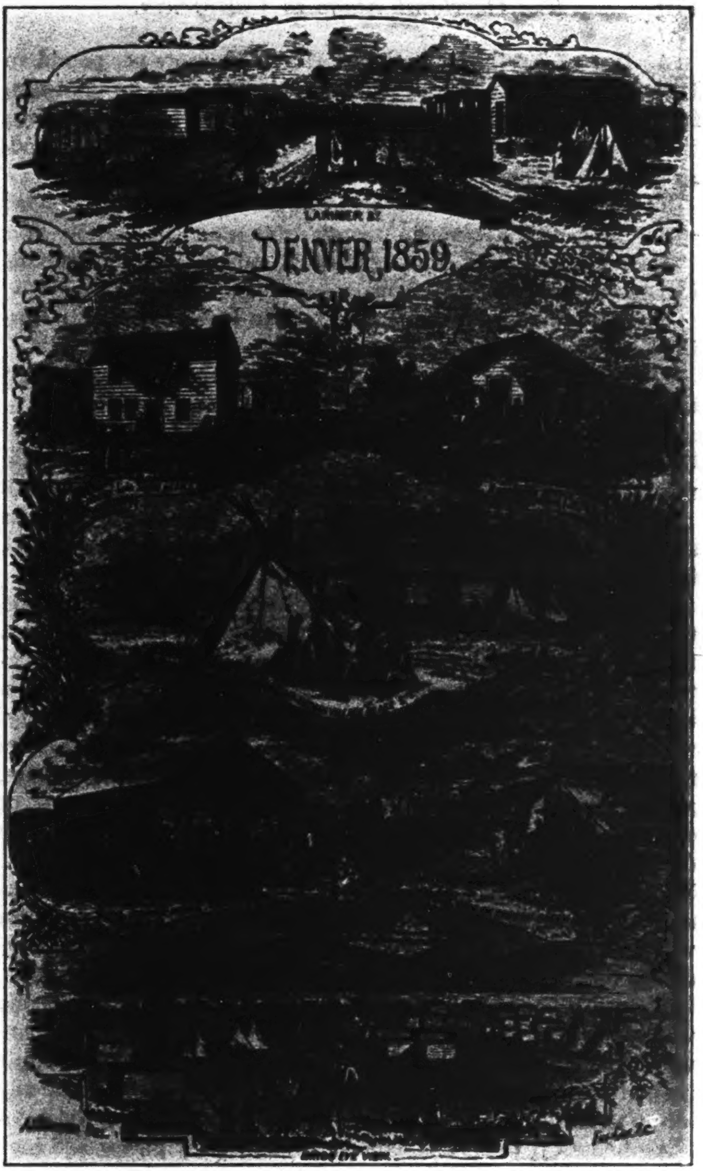
The locomotive that brought the first train into Denver had already become historic. For four or five years it had done service in the Platte valley during the construction of the Union Pacific, and was the first iron steed to enter Cheyenne, the first to cross the Black Hills, the first to climb over the summit of the Rocky Mountains, the first to cross the Wasatch range, the first to enter the Salt Lake valley, and the first whose shrill whistle was heard in the Colorado metropolis.

The first train over the Kansas Pacific reached Denver at 6:45 P. M., August 15, 1870, and thus the Colorado capital was placed on the line of a great transcontinental railway. After crossing the plains ten or twelve years on foot, on horseback, in prairie-schooners hauled by oxen or mules, and by the old stage-coach, the pioneers were delighted to see a Pullman palace-car. The first one to enter the city of Denver was the "Comanche," which rolled in over the Kansas Pacific road on October 7, 1870.

The historic old Planters' House, which so long remained a familiar landmark on Blake and Sixteenth streets, and in which was the headquarters of the overland stages, had a quartette of distinguished guests on September 6, 1868: Roscoe Conkling, W. B. Hazen, Louis Agassiz, and Gen. W. T. Sherman. On the 11th of September, 1866, two years before, General Sherman visited the city and was banqueted at the Planters'.

In connection with the early history of Denver, a number of additional interesting and truthful incidents might be mentioned.

> "Salt bacon, dried apples, beans and coffee comprised the chief articles of diet in the early days of Denver; flour, when to be had; fresh meat, when game abounded. Glass windows were scarce, and only two or three cabins had board floors. One lady, by sewing together gunny-sacks for a carpet and covering her log walls with sheets and table-cloths, gave her mansion an appearance of almost aristocratic refinement and comfort. Stools, tables and pole bedsteads were the staple furniture, while rough pine boxes did duty as bureaus and sideboards. The vacant places in the lower part of the embryonic city were occupied by Indian lodges, enlivened by squaws dressing the skins of wild animals or cooking dogs for dinner; naked children playing in the sand; and braves lounging on the ground, wearing no clothing except a narrow strip of cloth about the hips. Such was the picture in 1859. It was not materially changed in the spring of 1860, except that more and better buildings had arisen and the population amazingly augmented. All roads leading to the mountains were lined with ox or mule trains with white-sheeted wagons, winding their way slowly to the newly discovered and exceedingly prosperous gold-mines."—*Richardson's Beyond the Mississippi.*



—*From Richardson's "Beyond the Mississippi."*

As late as April, 1866, salt was 12 to 14 cents per pound in Denver; dried peaches, 45 to 70 cents; sugar, 36 to 38 cents; flour, per 100-pound sack, $15 to $18; meal, $11 per hundred; bacon hams, per pound, 30 to 40 cents; bacon sides, per pound, 25 to 40 cents; shoulders, 28 to 30 cents.

The first child was born March 3, 1859; a son of Jack McGaa—the mother an Arapahoe.

Miss Mary Walrod, daughter of Abraham Walrod, was the first white girl born in Denver.

The first religious services were held in December, 1858; Rev. C. W. Fisher, Methodist, officiating.

On the 1st of January, 1859, Auraria had fifty cabins; Denver, twenty; Montana, twenty.

The first city election took place December 19, 1859, and John C. Moore was chosen mayor. The first meeting of the city council was on January 21, 1860, when the mayor's message was received.

The first theater built was the Apollo. It was on Larimer street, between E and F streets, and was opened October 24, 1859, by Thorne's troupe, in "Richard III."

Jack Langrishe, the "free and easy" actor, went from Atchison to Denver early in the '60's, and some time afterwards built a theater that would seat about 1000 persons. It was a frame structure, two stories high, not unlike some that had already been built there. The performances took place in the second story, while on the first floor was a drinking saloon, with numerous frontier gambling attachments on the side. Faro, poker, roulette, monte, chuck-a-luck and a number of other exciting games of chance so long played in the West were in progress at all hours of the day and night—and they kept going seven days in the week. There was no let-up in the games and devices for fleecing the innocent. Four out of five who played lost. Some would sit down with hundreds of dollars of dust in their pockets and often play all day and night at a sitting, occasionally winning large amounts, but more often losing the "last shot in the locker." When one would "go broke" or tire of playing he would drop out, but there was some one standing near by ready to take his place. While the rush of travel across the plains continued, virtually without any let-up until the Indian outbreak on the plains in 1864, the gambling-houses, theaters and dance-halls were busy places, and took in piles of money.

In its early days Denver had quite a number of Confederate sympathizers. On the 24th of April, 1861, a rebel flag was run up over Wallingford & Murphy's store on Larimer street, but its stay was brief.

The first great fire in the consolidated city occurred April 19, 1863, when nearly all the business portion of Blake street—the best business thoroughfare in the city—was wiped out; loss, $250,000.

General Grant visited Denver July 1, 1868—the month in which occurred the last Indian outbreak.

The first street-car line was opened December 17, 1871, on Larimer and Sixteenth streets.

The first free school opened September 6, 1864.

The darkest day ever known in Denver's early history was July 12, 1866, when the news reached the city that the Union Pacific road could not be built on any of the numerous surveys with her on the route.

What is now the very heart of Denver was almost as barren as the middle of the road in 1863 and 1864. Cattle then grazed over much of the town site and very few if any of the lots were fenced. A few rough-board and log shanties had been built south of Curtis and Arapahoe streets, but even such buildings were decidedly scarce, those streets then being on the extreme outskirts of the city. There was not a business house south of Larimer street in 1863, and there was comparatively little business of any kind carried on west of Cherry creek. There was nothing in the shape of a bridge spanning this creek until after the great flood of May, 1864. Bridges were not needed in 1863, for the reason that there was not a drop of water in the bed of the creek. A sort of corduroy roadway had been built through the deep dry, sandy bed of Cherry creek from Blake street across. That portion of the city west of Cherry creek was first known as Auraria, and, for a few years, it was a question as to which place would ultimately be the main town. Denver, however, finally got the ascendency, and it continued to make such rapid strides that it was not long until it absorbed its early and only rival, which ever since has been known as West Denver.

From Denver, the grandest picture one can gaze upon is a view of the glorious old Rockies, over 100 miles of which are spread out in plain view west, north and south of the city. In the language of Bayard Taylor, the writer and traveler, "no external picture of the Alps can be placed beside it."

April 22, 1859, was the date of issue of the pioneer journal of Colorado, the *Rocky Mountain News.* This great paper, first started as a weekly, was founded by Hon. William N. Byers; but it happened that on the same day, only a little later, there also appeared a rival sheet for journalistic honors, the *Cherry Creek Pioneer*, issued by a man named Jack Merrick. In reality, Merrick was the first man to reach Denver with a printing-press, but the superior rustling force of workmen connected with the *News* party enabled them to get out their paper ahead of their rival. The first was the last and only number of the *Pioneer* ever issued, for, recognizing the fact that two papers were one too many in Denver at that early day, the plant was at once purchased by Thomas Gibson and consolidated with the *News.*

The *News* was published weekly about eighteen months before it appeared as a daily. It was not the first daily, however, established in Denver, but it was the first one to get the telegraphic news. Its first dispatches were published on the 13th of November, 1860. The "latest news by telegraph" was received on the plains at Fort Kearney when that military post was the western end of the Pacific wire stretched from Omaha. There its dispatches were taken off the wire and placed in a Government stamped envelope, thence carried by the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express, in charge of the messenger or driver, up the Platte valley to its destination, a distance of 400 miles, the time consumed in transit being about four days—considered fast time in the early '60's.

Publishing a newspaper under the shadow of the Rockies was subsequently a task that met numerous obstacles. Many a time the fearless frontier editor paid one dollar a pound for blank paper on which to print the *News.* Often it became necessary to issue on half, and, later, on quarter sheets. When all the white paper in the territory was exhausted, the publishers were obliged to use manila, and, not long afterwards, were forced to bring into requisition a half-dozen colors of tissue paper, which could be printed only on one side. I was a regular subscriber to the daily *News* the most of 1864, and remember the paper as plainly as if it were only yesterday. A few times it came out printed on tissue, with only a few short columns. That was after the Indians had placed an embargo on all commerce of the plains over the Platte Valley route. For 300 miles, and for at least two or three weeks, business of every kind along the line was at a standstill — practically paralyzed.

It was quite a task in 1859 and 1860, when the paper had just started, for the publishers to get the news. People in the new mining region wanted news from the East, and there was no telegraph line nearer than the Missouri river, over 650 miles away. The nearest post-office was Fort Laramie, over 200 miles distant to the north, on the Salt Lake trail.

When the *News* was being regularly issued as a daily and the Pacific telegraph had reached a point 100 miles west of Fort Kearney, the reports were taken off at Cottonwood Springs; and, still later, at old Julesburg, 100 miles further west, and still 200 miles east of Denver, but for a long time the nearest point where news was received by wire — nearly forty-eight hours away.

In the latter part of 1861 the subscription list of the weekly edition of the *News* had reached 1700, at $5 a year. The daily edition was 700, at $16 per year. Connected with the office was a first-class job-printing outfit. It cost something in Denver for printing in pioneer days. Ordinary business cards, $20 per 1000; one-eight-sheet handbills, $5 per 100; ball tickets, $10 per 100.

At that time the News Company owned and published a paper called the *Miners' Record*, at Tarryall, in the southern mines. They also had a branch office at Central City, forty-five miles up in the mountains, to which point they ran a pony express three times a week, upon the arrival of the war news per the California pony express and stage-coach at Denver. By the enterprise of the News Company, the miner and prospector on the summit of the Rockies received the latest news from the seat of war less than four days old.

The following appropriate gem appeared in one of the early issues of the *News* in 1859:

> "Hurrah for the land where the moor and the mountain
> Are sparkling with treasures no language hath told;
> Where the waves of the river, the spray of the fountain,
> Are bright with the glitter of genuine gold."

On the 15th of December, 1899, the pioneer paper, started as a little 10 x 12 folio, celebrated its fortieth anniversary, closing the event with a grand banquet in the evening, at which a goodly

OFFICE OF THE "ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS," DENVER, 1862.

number of the members of the association known as "The Colorado Pioneers" were present. It was a great event in the history of the paper, and the *News* closed an editorial which appeared in the paper the next morning as follows:

> "In extending its greetings and congratulations to the society of Colorado pioneers, whose anniversary was celebrated last evening, the *News* can do so with all the more heartiness and pride because it has borne, with its members, the burden of pioneer work, and can share with them the honors of pioneer success. As an influential factor in the progress of the city and state it stands without a rival. Its history is their history; its growth is a reflex of their growth; its future is closely bound up with their future, even as its past is linked with the annals of the four decades of Colorado's existence.
>
> "The ranks of the pioneers are thinning, and in a few years the last of the founders will have taken his departure over the long trail from which no traveler has ever returned. But they will have left behind them a record of splendid deeds and heroic endeavor which their posterity will forever prize. While many of them may sleep in humble graves, there will be one monument which will be shared by all, and that monument will be the State of Colorado."

Colorado is a wonderful state and is making rapid strides. Its greatest railway—the Denver & Rio Grande, the pride of the Centennial state—laid its first rail at Denver July 27, 1871. With the energy and push that have ever characterized this important road, its line was rushed ahead rapidly. Building along the foot-hills at the eastern base of the Rockies, in less than ninety days the neigh of the iron steed was heard in Colorado Springs, under the shadow of Pike's Peak, seventy-five miles to the south. The road did not stop, however, at that point. It was pushed forward to Pueblo, thence up the valley of the Arkansas, and soon the panting locomotive echoed through the grand cañon or royal gorge.

A branch of the road was extended southwest from Pueblo over Veta Pass in the later '70's, when it reached the highest point in North America surmounted by a locomotive. The road in 1880 reached Leadville, in its day the greatest lead and silver mining camp on the globe. But there was no stop. It continued to push forward numerous branches. It was the first road in Colorado to cross the continental divide and go into the Gunnison country. It continued to move ahead until it penetrated the rich San Juan and San Miguel regions. It was also the first road to reach Cripple Creek, one of the greatest gold mining camps on earth. Evidently there were no difficulties so great in building the "baby line" that its enthusiastic projectors could not overcome, for there is not a prominent mining camp in Colorado that is not reached by the Denver & Rio Grande. They have laid the iron bands over the rolling prairies, across the foothills; followed winding streams and gulches; passed roaring cataracts; bored tunnels and spanned precipitous mountain gorges. They have climbed to the summit of a number of the higher Rocky Mountain passes, crossed the "back-bone of the continent," from which can be counted hundreds of towering peaks and cliffs and ranges, innumerable valleys, various streams, countless groves of pine and quaking aspen, and practically no end of the most delightful mountain scenery the sun ever shone upon.

The road has penetrated the Black Cañon of the Gunnison for a distance of fifteen miles, in which many miles of granite had to be blasted out for the road-bed. Along portions of this cañon the almost perpendicular walls reach hundreds of feet in height, through which the river rushes like a mighty cataract, presenting to the tourist a section of the grandest and most rugged scenery human eyes ever feasted on. The road was extended westward in the '80's to the Salt Lake valley, and the Mormon capital has in it one of the leading trunk lines eastward.

No railroad ever built can surpass the Rio Grande for its varied and lovely scenery. Tourists no longer need cross the Atlantic on the long voyage to Europe, seeking among the Alps Italian skies and charming landscapes. Colorado's sunshine is practically perpetual. The glorious Rocky Mountains, with their wonderful and apparently endless attractions in the way of scenery, far surpass anything ever discovered.

In a little more than a quarter of a century the Rio Grande has built a network of road into almost every section of Colorado. Leaving Denver, in a few hours it can mount to an altitude of 10,500 feet, to immense snow-drifts in midsummer, and, in an hour or two from them can drop down to boiling-hot springs, at several thousand feet lower altitude.

A feature of the management of the Rio Grande is that it has arranged for tourists a trip so that they can make what is called a "swing around the circle"; in other words, put in a week, if necessary, and make a tour of 1000 miles, taking in on the "circle," with observation cars, many of the prominent towns and mining camps, unsurpassed agricultural, fruit and stock regions, and the longest and loveliest stretch of the most picturesque and charming scenery on the globe.

The "baby line," as it is known at home, with its thousands of miles of road-bed, surely has grown to be a giant among the Rocky Mountain railways. It is perhaps only a question of time when this wonderful road will have its own through line from Denver westward to the Golden Gate.

STAGE CROSSING BIG BLUE RIVER AT MARYSVILLE, KAN.

A KANSAS RANCHMAN'S EXPERIENCE FREIGHTING TO DENVER. *Page 184.*

CHAPTER IX.

DENVER'S EARLY EASTERN MAIL.

THE first settlement on the site of Denver was made in the summer of 1858. It was fully two years afterward, however, before the people of the town and adjacent camps were so fortunate as to be provided by Government with a direct mail. What letters and papers they had from time to time been receiving from loved ones in the East were brought from Fort Laramie, the nearest post-office, some 200 miles distant to the north, being left there by the stage which carried the mail once or twice a month between the Missouri river and Salt Lake City. Later the letters were forwarded from Old California Crossing (Beauvais ranch), and, still later, from old Julesburg (Upper California Crossing), 200 miles east of Denver.

The next nearest post-office was at Fort Kearney, 400 miles down the Platte, east of Denver. With such limited means as they then possessed for getting their mail, often letters were two and three months old when received in Denver, being brought from Fort Laramie by private conveyance, certain parties in the meantime having been selected for carrying the precious missives. The charge on a letter by this private enterprise was fifty cents, and on newspapers ten cents each; but under the circumstances those patronizing it were only too glad of the opportunity to do so, even at what would now seem exorbitant prices.

It was one of the proudest days in the early history of Denver when, on the 7th of June, 1859, the first two Concord coaches of the Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express arrived over the route laid out by Jones & Russell, branching off from Junction City onto the divide between the Smoky Hill and Republican rivers. The arrival was the occasion for great rejoicing, because the express brought a large number of letters only two weeks old for residents of the new mining camp. On the new stages were nine through passengers. Between fourteen and fifteen days had been consumed in making the journey from the Missouri river; but that was considered good time in the later '50's, the nearest railway being fully 750 miles distant. The arrival of the two Concord stages in Denver was greeted by the business men and the miners as enthusiastically in 1859 as was the advent of the first passenger-train which came down from Cheyenne, thundering over the rails into the "Queen City of the Plains," a little more than ten years later.

"Uncle Sam" was very slow in recognizing the appeals of the pioneers for a direct mail to the so-called "Pike's Peak gold region," for the first postal route was not established and in operation until August 10, 1860. The contractor carried the mail from Fort Kearney to Denver, about 400 miles, once a week, the schedule time being six and one-half days. The reason why it was carried from Fort Kearney was because mail routes intersected at that important military post from Atchison, Nebraska City, and Omaha, the fort being on the main overland route, on the south side of the Platte, on the natural highway from Atchison to Salt Lake City. They had been waiting two years for the establishment of a mail route. But there were congratulations in Denver by every one on the arrival there of the first regular United States mail, and the event was accordingly celebrated in genuine frontier style.

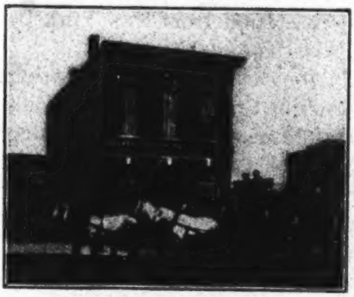
Denver grew rapidly, and very soon became quite an important staging center. As new mining camps were being opened, mail routes centered there from nearly all directions. This was early in the '60's, while the camp was yet an infant city. Besides the daily line of overland Concord coaches which ran across the continent from Atchison to California, there were stages which carried the mail running south from Denver to Colorado City, Pueblo, and Santa Fé.

The era of staging in Denver lasted for a period of about ten years. The Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express came first. This was followed by the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express; then by Ben. Holladay's overland stage line; then the Butterfield Overland Despatch; then the Holladay Overland Mail and Express Company; then Wells, Fargo & Co., John Hughes & Co., and Spottswood, Bogue & Co. The latter ran a line from Denver into the mountains.

Lines were operated for a time in 1860 between Denver and the Gregory mines by Kehler & Montgomery and Hinckley & Co.; but neither of these was able to hold out long, and soon were swallowed by Holladay, the great "overland stage" man, with headquarters at Atchison. For some time in the early '60's a weekly line ran to "Buckskin Joe," a rich gold camp up near the back-bone of the continent.

Following the completion of the Colorado Central railroad from Denver to Golden City, a line of six-horse Concords made daily trips to Black Hawk, Central City, Idaho Springs, and Georgetown, taking in Virginia Cañon. Between Denver and Fairplay there was a triweekly line, the trip being made over the "rough and rugged" road in eighteen hours, passengers stopping over night on the way.

In addition to the several stage routes heretofore enjoyed by Denver, there were other lines that went to points not far away, but all naturally tributary to her. Leadville, which has produced millions of silver and gold, was not dreamed of in the '60's. The Gunnison country was unknown as a mining region until the later '70's; the prosperous San Juan and San Miguel regions at that time had never been heard of in connection with mining; and the Cripple Creek gold district, which has astonished the world as a rich producer of the yellow metal, was not discovered and opened up for nearly a third of a century after the founding of Denver.



Holladay Overland Mail and Express Office at Denver, 1866.*

The most severe trial ever experienced with mail matters in the early history of Denver was during the summer of 1864, when, for about six weeks, the Indians had possession of the greater part of the Platte route for a distance of about 300 miles, between Fort Kearney and Bijou creek. All traffic in the Platte valley suddenly stopped, and no stages left Atchison during that exciting period. In consequence, tons of mail from the East destined for Colorado, Utah, California and the Pacific territories accumulated at Atchison. Orders finally came from Washington to send it all back to New York, where it was put on board an ocean steamer and sent around to California *via* the Isthmus. On reaching San Francisco, it was forwarded by steamer to Sacramento, thence by rail to Placerville, where it was put aboard the overland stagecoach, and, after a delay of several weeks, it finally reached its destination at Denver, having, in the meantime, traveled a distance of about 9500 miles. During the six weeks of Indian troubles on the Platte, the overland stages arrived and departed daily between Denver and California.

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*By permision of the Denver History Company.

As soon as they had learned in Denver what disposition had been made of the accumulated mails quite naturally many felt disappointed, and there was much protesting. Some one, greatly exasperated after hearing what had occurred, volunteered a vigorous protest, which was sent by telegraph to the post-office department, as follows: "Send the Denver mail by ox train; but, for Heaven's sake, do n't send any more around from New York by ocean route *via* California."

While coming east along the Platte, early one evening during the summer of 1863, not long after we had passed over O'Fallon's Bluffs, a rather singular accident befell us, while we were bowling along at the usual gait. Just after sunset the off front wheel of the stage—the one directly under the driver's seat—ran off the axle. Before any one on the coach had time to even think, there was an exciting runaway. The team was full of life, and in its wild dash down the valley it seemed that it sped with almost the rapidity of a fast-mail train. I expected every minute to see the driver tumble headlong off the box; so held on to him as best I could with one hand, saving myself with the other. With my assistance he managed to keep his seat. For 200 or 300 yards or more the four horses fairly flew; they went so fast that the axle was kept from dragging on the ground. Finally the driver, by application of the brake, succeeded in bringing the team to a halt.

Climbing down from the box, I ran back to find the wheel and the missing nut. I knew when the wheel rolled off and where it should be found, but it was some time ere I succeeded in finding the nut, which was accomplished by the aid of one of the coach lamps and a careful search. Inside the stage were five or six frightened passengers, but they all had to alight and help lift to enable us to get the wheel in place, so as to proceed on our journey. It was an unusual accident—the first and only one of the kind I ever witnessed on the "Overland"—and probably was

AN ACCIDENT NEAR O'FALLON'S BLUFFS. *Page 182.*

due to the carelessness of the man who last adjusted the nut aftergreasing; but fortunately it only caused a little delay, and no one was hurt and nothing injured.

In crossing the plains by stage, sage-brush was first visible along the South Platte, in the southwestern portion of Nebraska and in the dry, sandy region of northeastern Colorado. As we journeyed westward toward the east slope of the Rockies, the region continued to get more dry, and the growth of the plant appeared to increase. Way up in the mountains, at an elevation of 10,000 feet or more, the plant became even more rank and vigorous. The dryer the atmosphere, as altitude is gained, the better the sage-brush flourishes. Freighters, where it could be found, would grub out the shrub and use it for fuel, when getting their night and morning meals at their camps, during the tedious drive across the plains, and most of that growing by the roadside had been taken. While the plant is rather pretty, apparently of little or no use except for fuel, it is said the Indians used it in some form to cure various ills; and even the palefaces, especially the old mountaineers and ranchmen on the frontier and many miners and prospectors, soon learned of its good qualities, and often used it in making a tea which, it was said, would cure a great many diseases, and, by some, was found infallible in breaking up the most obstinate cases of mountain fever.

Some portions of the journey on the overland route were dreary and desolate in the extreme. There were several barren stretches at intervals along the Platte where the surface of the country was almost white with alkali; notably was this so in a number of places between Cottonwood Springs and old Julesburg, and also between Julesburg and Bijou creek. It was said that the Indians would scrape up the alkali and use it as a substitute for saleratus and soda in making their bread and biscuit; but as I never saw them do it, I think we may suppose the story lacks confirmation. There is little doubt, however, that the genuine alkali of the plains possesses most, if not all, of the ingredients contained in saleratus.

Some time in the fall of 1863 a shrewd Kansas ranchman took it into his head that a load of nice, fat turkeys taken into the Denver market would be appreciated, and at the same time would, owing to the high prices for such delicacies, bring him in considerable revenue. He accordingly fitted up a wagon with a double frame, designed for two tiers of choice turkeys. Everything went along nicely until he reached a point way up the South Platte between old Julesburg and Denver. Here the ranchman encountered a snag, or rather had an expensive joke played on him. By some unaccountable accident all of his turkeys suddenly got loose, and almost before their owner knew it they were roaming the plains. When they reached the ground they appeared to be wild turkeys and it was almost impossible to corral them. A lively and exciting chase ensued, in which all about the premises (for there was a ranch near) joined enthusiastically. The farmer seemed to be "broken up" on account of the mishap. He spent much time in trying to get the turkeys together again, but quite a number of them, in spite of his efforts, were lost, having disappeared on the range. It was afterwards reported—how truthfully I do not know—that some of the station keepers, stage agents and a few drivers and stock tenders lived high on roast turkey for the first time since they had been residing on the South Platte. Possibly the accident to the turkey coop might have been explained by some one of those drivers.

Occasionally the services of a physician were needed on the overland route, but up to the early part of 1863 there was not a doctor on the plains between Fort Kearney and Denver, a distance of about 400 miles. Now and then it was necessary to send 200 miles for a physician. During the spring of 1863, however, a disciple of Esculapius, hailing from Ohio as Doctor Lewis, located on the South Platte, between Alkali Lake and old Julesburg, where he hung out his shingle, and at once began practicing his profession. Soon he fell into the good graces of the Indians. He was not there very long, however, before he married a young squaw and took up his permanent residence in one of the tepees.

I made the acquaintance of the doctor one morning about a week or ten days after his marriage, while on one of my return trips from Denver to Atchison by stage. He was a fine-looking man, about thirty-five years old. In stature he was considerably above medium size, tall and erect as an Indian, and in every way he appeared to be a gentleman and a social good fellow. After talking with him a few minutes, I jokingly assured him that, in the practice of his profession, he would doubtless have an extensive ride, since he was a little more than 200 miles from Denver and nearly the same distance from Fort Kearney. After conversing with him a little while, he politely invited me into his wigwam and introduced me to his bride, who was now "Mrs. Doctor Lewis."

The interior of the wigwam, I was quite surprised to find, was one of the neatest and best-arranged places of the kind I ever visited. Everything appeared to be clean and tidy, and the carpets and mats and rugs — some of them made of different kinds of furs, and all of them the handiwork of the bride — were quite artistic and very pretty. She was a favorite daughter of a "high-up" Indian belonging to the Sioux tribe, and was a real handsome and extremely modest young woman, and appeared to be quite devotedly attached to the domestic affairs in her new home. Later, on several occasions, sometimes on the backs of their ponies riding up and down the Platte, I met the doctor and his dusky companion on my overland trips as messenger. I seldom made a trip that I was not called upon to make purchases for him in

Atchison or Denver. He frequently invited me to stop and partake of the hospitality of his household, but I never had an opportunity to do so, as the meals served on the stage line by the company were at regular public eating stations, and no time could be lost in stopping long enough to partake even of the necessaries at private houses.

At a ranch out on the South Platte between Cottonwood Springs and Alkali Lake, the keepers had placed a board across the top of two barrels to give the inside of the building something like the appearance of a frontier bar. At this place, it was said by a few of the stage-drivers and stock tenders that there was sold over this "bar" a decoction of some of the vilest stuff under the name of "old Bourbon whisky" that ever irrigated the throat of the worst old toper.

To a few gallons of "sod-corn juice," it was said that the proprietors of the place would add a quantity of tobacco and some poisonous drugs, and thus manufacture a barrel of the worst "rotgut" ever produced. The vile liquid was sold to thirsty customers at enormous prices, for it appeared out of the question for a large majority of the fellows whacking mules and oxen across the plains in overland freighting days to dispense with liquor. It mattered little with a great majority of them what the stuff they drank was made of, so it went by the name of whisky and had even a faint smell of liquor about it.

At another ranch, also on the South Platte between Julesburg and Denver, in plain sight of the Rockies, where the stage-driver once stopped for a plug of tobacco, it occurred to one of the passengers that he ought to get his empty pocket flask filled. He was not a little surprised when he was soon informed by the ranchman that he would have to wait perhaps a quarter to half an hour, as he was then trying to thaw out his "whisky," which, unfortunately, had frozen in the barrel the preceding night.

Being of a somewhat inquisitive nature, the passenger, in search of information, wanted to know how it happened that the whisky was frozen. This unexpected question somewhat puzzled the ranchman, who could not exactly tell—it was a conundrum to him; but he finally gave it as his opinion that it was on account of the high altitude of Colorado. While this explanation came a little late—and appeared to be a pretty fair answer—it was not satisfactory to the thirsty passenger, who volunteered the suggestion that it was more likely caused by being too strongly irrigated with "aqua" from the South Platte, which stream was not many rods distant from the premises.

On the plains one would experience all kinds of weather. Sometimes, while making a trip, after a long dry spell, accompanied by a strong wind, the dust encountered was almost intolerable. Where there was so much travel, in hot weather, there were usually immense quantities of dust. Along the Platte river, where there was such enormous traffic—hundreds of wagons, some drawn by six yoke of cattle, passing over the road daily—it was worse than on any other part of the route. Portions of the road at times were like ash-heaps, because much of the way the soil was very sandy.

When the road was lined with mule and ox trains moving east and west, as a matter of course the animals were constantly stirring up the dust, which in places frequently was from three to six inches deep. With a strong wind blowing clouds of dust in one's face—sometimes constantly for two or three days—the result can better be imagined than described. How some of the stage-drivers not having their eyes protected ever stood the dust for so many long years it is difficult to imagine. I could not help pitying them, as well as the stage teams; also the poor, dumb oxen, as they wearily trudged along over the road day after day and week after week on the long, tedious journey. It was a severe trial for me to endure. But I soon learned for myself how to meet such obstacles; I procured a veil and carried it continually, putting it over my face when occasion demanded, and thus kept out of my eyes considerable dust.

Wells-Fargo Stage and Office, at Salt Lake City.

Away up on the South Platte, between O'Fallon's Bluffs and Bijou creek, in a number of places, for a distance of over 150 miles, there was a vast amount of alkali dust that must necessarily be encountered at times. Now and then there was a stage passenger who could not get along without the use of certain expressions more forcible than elegant. Nothing would do but deliver himself of a string of "cuss" words not found in the dictionaries. Since then I have learned by experience that, in warm weather, a sponge soaked with water and tied against the nostrils is a very simple and a most excellent remedy, when riding in the dust, to exclude it from the lungs.

For letters carried to Denver by the Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express the price was twenty-five cents. To get an uncommonly big letter, the recipient usually had to "come down" with "four bits." But no one seemed to grumble in those days for having to pay the sum demanded for a letter from home. It was before a mail route had been established in the pioneer Rocky Mountain mining camp, at the junction of Cherry creek with the South Platte, and a great majority of those receiving letters were only too glad to get them at almost any price.

For a long time the stage and express office of the "Overland" was in the Planters' House, at the southeast corner of Blake and Sixteenth streets, where it remained until 1866, when, the stage line having passed from Ben. Holladay into the hands of Wells, Fargo & Co., the headquarters were moved from the old location up to Fifteenth and Holladay streets.

CHAPTER X.

MY FIRST TRIP ACROSS THE PLAINS.

ON the 18th of January, 1863, while clerking in the Atchison post-office—holding the position of assistant postmaster under John A. Martin, afterwards governor, during Lincoln's first administration, I was appointed express messenger on the great overland stage line. The "run" was from Atchison, Kan., to Denver, Colo.; distance, 653 miles. I was to start on my first trip the following Monday morning, January 23. Although for some time I had had a desire for some such position, the appointment was a complete surprise, and I hardly knew what to think of it. Having for ten years been housed up in a dozen or more printing-offices and two years in the post-office, my first thought was, "Can I stand such a trip?"

I was aware that the messenger on the "Overland" was expected to ride outside, on the box with the driver, and to go six days and nights at a time without undressing. I knew there were also dangers connected with the position: exposure to all kinds of weather, occasional robberies by highwaymen, and assaults from the hostile Indians scattered on the plains along the line. But what puzzled me most was, "How can I, after being a dozen years indoors, make a journey of more than 600 miles in mid-winter, riding the distance in six successive days and nights, in all kinds of weather, rain or shine, snow or sleet?" At first thought it appeared almost impossible, but there was no time to dwell. The stage authorities must have a man without delay. To take such a position in warm weather would have been pleasanter, but there happened to be a vacancy at this particular time and it had to be filled.

I went personally to headquarters and accepted the appointment. With less than five days for preparation, I made every hour count from that time until the date of my departure. Besides my every-day wearing apparel, my outfit consisted of a gum coat, a buffalo robe, pair of blankets, Government blue overcoat with a cape—suitable for "roughing it" on the plains—a pair of flannel overalls, fur muffler, a small shawl, buffalo overshoes, and, last but not least, a Wesson breech-loading rifle, a Colt's navy revolver, with belt and scabbard and plenty of ammunition.

My paraphernalia being all arranged, on the following Monday morning I was ready for duty. Repairing to the company's office on the south side of Commercial street, between the levee and Second street, I began to check up on the way-bill for the various packages placed in my charge—a number of them containing treasure—and at eight o'clock, with the valuables in the strong box, and the box placed in the front boot of the stage-coach, with the bulky packages secure in the rear boot, I buckled on my "hip howitzer" and was prepared for my first trip to Denver.

A load of passengers was inside the stage. The driver, after receiving the "way pocket" from the agent, gave the leaders the lash, and in an instant we were off on our way across the plains. The wind was blowing cold from the northwest, and when the stage reached Lancaster, the first station, ten miles out, I was thoroughly chilled. I said nothing, however, about being cold. The driver changed teams and was ready to move on in three or four minutes, for no time must be wasted at the frequent stations. Again mounting the box with the driver, we were on our way to the next station—Kennekuk—fourteen miles distant. Thomas Perry kept the eating station, and Mrs. Perry had a smoking-hot dinner ready, with the very best of coffee, to which we did ample justice. In early days dances were held there, and, when a young man sparking the girl that became his wife, Hon. D. W. Wilder used to "trip the light fantastic toe" at the old station. Kennekuk was the first "home" station out from Atchison, and here drivers were changed. It was a little town of perhaps a dozen houses, having a store, blacksmith shop, etc. The Kickapoo Indian agency was one of the most prominent buildings here, located near the old road, in the northwest part of the town.

Leaving Kennekuk, it was but a short distance to the eastern border of the Kickapoo reservation, containing 152,417 acres—undoubtedly one of the finest bodies of land in Kansas. The old stone mission of the tribe, erected as early as 1851, and which subsequently had been one of the very prominent landmarks in that part of Kansas, visible for many miles in all directions, was less than a mile northwest of the stage station, adjoining the now thriving city of Horton. Nothing at this time remains of the old structure except a portion of the basement walls. The mission was a prominent building in the '50's, and in it a few years later a room was fitted up where the Indian boys and girls were taught to read and write by Miss Annie G. Adams, eldest daughter of the late Hon. Henry J. Adams, a Kansas pioneer, and the first free-state mayor of Leavenworth. It is also said a portion of the old building was used as a hotel in the later '50's by the stage company. Maj. C. B. Keith was, in the early '50's, agent for the Kickapoos. He was afterwards succeeded by Maj. Abram Bennett, of Kennekuk; and later the position was given to Judge F. G. Adams, of Atchison, one of the Kansas free-state pioneers, who came out in 1855, and, from 1875 until the day of his death, December 2, 1899, was secretary of the Kansas State Historical Society.

At Kennekuk the road from St. Joseph, thirty-five miles distant, intersected this important overland highway across the plains, over which the stages, most of the military stores, mill and mining machinery and a large part of the commerce of the plains passed. Originally the route was the great military road overland, its eastern or initial starting-point being Fort Leavenworth. The road from Atchison intersected this important highway at Mormon Grove, so called because, in the early '50's, it was a favorite camping spot for the "Latter-day Saints," some three miles out from Atchison.

Kickapoo stage station, located on the reservation, and christened in honor of the famous tribe of Indians bearing that name, was the next stopping place, twelve miles farther west. The house was kept by a New Yorker from Painted Post named H. N. Rising, a Kansas pioneer and surveyor. This station was reached a little after three o'clock, when another change of teams was made. Along the stage line, there were only two or three houses visible on the reservation between the stations of Kennekuk and Kickapoo. The land comprising the old reservation is gently rolling prairie, well watered with springs and creeks, and also quite well timbered for a Western prairie country, having a goodly supply of walnut, elm, oak, and cottonwood. In short, it is one of the garden spots of northern Kansas. Across the western line of the reservation was the next station, distant thirteen miles, called Log Chain.

EXCITING CHASE OF ROBERT SEWELL ("Old Bob Ridley.") *Page 194.*

Log Chain was the home of "Old Bob Ridley," who was considerable of a character on the overland line in the early '60's. The most of his stage driving was on the eastern division, at various points between Atchison and Fort Kearney. Bob was a quiet, good-natured fellow, and greatly admired by his friends. Many a time have I sat on the box and ridden with him all night. Besides being one of the very best of fellows, he was also a great story-teller, a good conversationalist, and he never failed to entertain his listeners. His real name was Robert Sewell, but not one person in a hundred ever knew him on the overland route by any other name than "Old Bob Ridley."[*]

ROBERT SEWELL.
"Old Bob Ridley."
(From an old photograph.)

In the early staging days on this line it seems he had the foresight to select a quarter-section of choice land near Log Chain station, which he steadily improved; he settled down to hard work on the land (after the Union Pacific had superseded the stage line), and made of the place a splendid farm. Bob afterwards moved to Wetmore, on the Central Branch Union Pacific railroad, a few miles southeast from the historic old Log Chain station, and died there, in the later '80's, greatly respected by a large number of warm friends and acquaintances.

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[*] "Bob was a humorist; and he had a great faculty for begging tobacco of the passengers, when he met the up- or down-coming coach. A man would pass his plug to Bob, who would cut off a great chunk and put in his pocket, and then, as he was about to pass the plug back, cut off aouther piece, remarking: 'I have a brother that chews, and I guess I'll take a little for him.' Congressman Champ Clark, of Missouri, was one of his victims; and when he made the stereotyped remark about his brother chewing, and handed back the remnant of the plug, Clark examined it, and then threw it at him with the remark: 'I guess the whole family chews, and you'd better take the rest.' The laugh was on Bob that time, but he picked up the tobacco and thanked the congressman very politely. He kept all the stock tenders and other drivers on his run in tobacco. He was a very liberal fellow, and only begged tobacco out of 'pure cussedness,' for the 'fun of the thing.' He was a faithful man, and I once saw him catch two fellows by the nape of their necks and bump their heads together till they could see stars, when they were about to fight, remarking to the belligerents: 'Your little hands were never made to tear each other's eyes.'"—*Levi Hensel.*

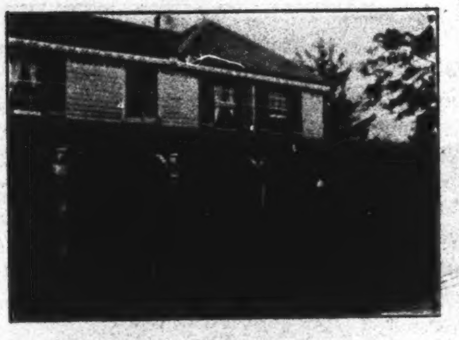
In many respects Bob Ridley was a curiosity. At times he used to drive in and out of Atchison, and nearly all the old-timers there knew him. Although he was very quiet, he was a man possessed of nerves of steel. He was engaged one time in staging days to take an extra coach from Atchison for some special purpose across the plains to Denver. Nothing remarkable on this trip occurred, however, until Cottonwood Springs, near the junction of the Platte forks, was passed. Soon the four mules hitched to the stage began to get uneasy and started off at a lively gait. So keen to run were the animals that it was with difficulty Bob could hold them. When a point a few miles west of the station was reached, a roving band of Indians, with a whoop and a hideous yell, swept down from the adjacent hills south of the Platte and made an attack. Luckily the road was level and free from all obstructions. As the stage was empty and the long-eared animals were inclined to run, and Bob knew it was death to remain near that spot, there was no other alternative than to let the mules have their own way. There was a run and a fight, and for a few minutes it was lively. Armed with an improved rifle and a revolver and plenty of ammunition, Ridley made it as hot as he could for his dusky assailants. In their lively chase for his scalp, it is related that he wounded ten or a dozen of his pursuers and three of them were killed outright. In the engagement several of the Indian ponies were killed or severely crippled.

The fight had not progressed long until Ridley found that, even single-handed, he was getting the best of it. His mules could outrun the ponies, for Holladay would n't have any stock on the stage line that could n't get away from Indian ponies. Frequently, when speaking of the fight afterwards, Bob alluded to it as a "picnic." In describing it, "the Indians," he said, "came up behind and took after him; but as the mules were among the best that ever hauled a stage-coach, they easily outran the scrub ponies the Indians were riding." There was a large band of savages to shoot among when hostilities began, and it was not difficult to bring down a "scalp lifter" or a pony almost every shot. Soon the Indians, seeing their numbers were being thinned, became timid, and many dropped back and scattered, but a few of those more brave kept in range for five or six

JOHN E. SMITH'S HOTEL, SENECA, KAN.
Photo. in the early '70's.

miles. The mules played an important part in the chase. They kept the road all right, seemingly being possessed of natural instinct, instead of becoming panic-stricken (as they often do under such excitement) and leaving the road. Ridley soon found that the mules were perfectly safe and, tying the lines around his body, he let them go, and gave his whole attention to the fight, and won a glorious victory. So well pleased was Ben. Holladay, his employer, that Ridley had saved his coach and team, that he gave him a handsome gold watch for the part he had so successfully played.

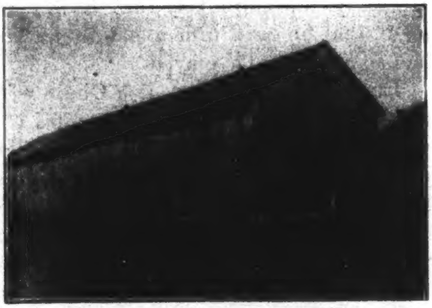
Eleven miles beyond Log Chain was the handsome and progressive town of Seneca, the capital of Nemaha county, located well up on the head waters of the Nemaha river. It was sixty miles a little north of west from Atchison, and we reached it a little before dark, after a cold ride of nearly ten hours. Coming off the hill a mile or so east of town, the place showed off nicely, with its well-constructed buildings. On the way we had passed the old, abandoned town site of Lincoln, which in pioneer days of Nemaha county bid fair to outstrip Seneca for the county-seat. Many a Western town has, like this one, returned to bare prairie.



GUITTARD'S STATION. West view.

The stage station at Seneca was kept by that enterprising, shrewd New Hampshire Yankee, John E. Smith. Mr. Smith was one of the pioneers of his town and county in staging days, and was probably more widely and better known throughout northern Kansas than any other landlord. His hotel, built of lumber hauled from the Missouri river, was the first building put up on the town site. It is no exaggeration to say that he has entertained more public men crossing the plains by the overland stage than any other living person. Although years ago he gave up the hotel and retired to his farm adjoining the city, and some years ago passed his three score and ten, he is still a vigorous and remarkably well-preserved man. He is likewise the last one now left of the overland stage men in his town. His was a two-story hotel, one of the finest between Atchison and Denver. He was also well prepared to care for horses and mules, for in the rear was a commodious barn, one of the best between the Missouri and the mountains on the overland route.

During the early days of pony express, overland staging and freighting across the plains, Seneca was the first town of importance reached westward from Atchison. After riding sixty miles over bare prairie, the house kept by Mr. Smith, as it came in view, looked like a mammoth concern. It was a well-built frame structure, painted



Barn at Guittard's station.

white, and everything about the premises was kept in the best order. His wife was a model landlady, and no one ever stopped there and partook of a meal without hoping he might some day come again.

Among those entertained in the early days by Mr. Smith were Generals Lane and Pomeroy, pioneers and the first United States senators from Kansas, scores of army officials, every judge and nearly every lawyer throughout northern Kansas. Ben. Holladay, the owner of the great stage line, several times partook of the necessaries there in the early '60's; Albert D. Richardson, the noted *Tribune* war correspondent had often dined there; Col. Thomas W. Knox. the well-known author, who had gone around the world for the New York *Herald*, had been a guest there; "Mark Twain," author of "Innocents Abroad" and "Roughing It"; Gen. P. E. Connor, who commanded the United States forces at Salt Lake; Richard J. Hinton, author of "John Brown and his Men"; Bayard Taylor, the famous traveler and writer; Colonel Chivington, the hero of Sand Creek; Hon. Schuyler Colfax; Bishop E. S. Janes, of the Methodist Episcopal church; Fargo, Cheney, and Barney, the noted express men; Jim Bridger, the famous trapper, scout, and guide; Russell, Majors, and Waddell, the noted transportation firm; Dave Butterfield, the "Overland Despatch" man; "Artemus Ward," the renowned humorist; scores of army and navy officials; foreign diplomats from China and Japan; the senators and representatives of California and Oregon; the delegates to Congress from the territories of the great West; nearly all the prominent Mormon leaders of Utah; and hundreds of other notables from all parts of the country. One of the best compliments ever paid to the house was by Hon. John J. Ingalls, who often stopped there when his business called him to Seneca to attend court, while practicing at the bar, in the '60's and early '70's. He said: "Mrs. Smith kept the kitchen floor of her house clean enough to eat off it."

Beyond Seneca, a distance of twelve miles—seventy-two miles out from Atchison—Laramie Creek is reached. The station, however, was better known among the "Overland" boys as "Frogtown." The stage officials made that a "home" station; *i. e.*, the drivers drove through from Log Chain, the distance being twenty-three miles. The next stop was at Guittard's, quite a prominent station, twelve miles farther. The senior, Mr. George

(Reading from left to right.)
JOSEPH GUITTARD.
XAVIER GUITTARD.
JOSEPH THOMANN.

JOHN H. CLARK.*
Drove an ox team from St. Joseph to Sacramento in 1852.

Guittard, had quite a large family. He was by birth a Frenchman, and one of the pioneers of that part of Marshall county, having settled there with his sons in the spring of 1857.

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*JOHN H. CLARK, who left Cincinnati and crossed the plains to California in 1852, had a remarkable trip. He made the long overland journey with oxen, being five months on the road. Before starting out he resolved never to travel on Sunday unless it became actually necessary to get water and grass for his stock. The Lord's day he considered holy, and, with his men and stock, all on that day rested. Thousands of men on the plains more eager and anxious to be among the first to get through to the gold diggings, often traveled hours at night and all day Sunday, the same as any other day. Some of them rushed ahead with all their might, and with their outfits passed Mr. Clark when only a few miles west of the Big Blue river at Marysville. The trip was very slow and tedious, but Mr. Clark with his company kept steadily pushing forward six days in the week. While going through Nevada, long before he entered the eastern border of California, he passed the same men who, months before, had passed him when only a few days or weeks out from the Missouri river. Their stock, what few head were yet alive, was terribly run down—little left but skin and bone—and the entire parties generally used up and demoralised. All appeared to be worn out from exhaustion. Neither man nor beast had had any rest except what they got at the end of a long day's journey at night. Mr. Clark spent nearly two weeks resting himself and party and recuperating his stock at Salt Lake, reaching Sacramento without losing an animal or a man, his stock apparently being as fresh and in about as good condition on arriving at their destination as they were the day he crossed the "Big Muddy" at St. Joseph and started out on the trip, nearly five months before.

Guittard's was also one of the best known stopping-places between the Missouri river and the Rocky Mountains, according to the opinion of freighters and stage men. All of the Guittard family were greatly respected, and few persons partook of meals there in the early '60's without feeling that they were being entertained on a well-managed Western farm or ranch. One of the boys was named Xavier; he could speak English fluently and was the business man of the premises. He was also postmaster at Guittard's Station, having been appointed under Lincoln's first administration, in 1861. He still holds the office, and is probably the oldest Nasby in Kansas, having held the place for over forty years.

When the daily stage line was started, the route was from Guittard's west *via* Marysville, where it crossed the Big Blue river by means of a rope ferry. In dry weather, when the river was low, the stages forded it. Marysville then was one of the oldest and most widely known towns in northern Kansas. Located on the frontier, about 100 miles a little north of west from Atchison, it was laid out by Gen. Frank J. Marshall in the spring of 1854. Marshall came from the South at an early day and established the first ferry on the Big Blue river in 1849, some five years before Kansas was thrown open to settlement. It was started to catch the immense overland travel to the California gold-mines, following the excitement on account of the discoveries of 1848. In 1851, after it had been operated some two years, the ferry was moved up the stream a short distance to the present site of the city of Marysville, the town laid out and named for his wife, as the county of Marshall is named for himself. The old ferry was used until the river was spanned by a bridge.

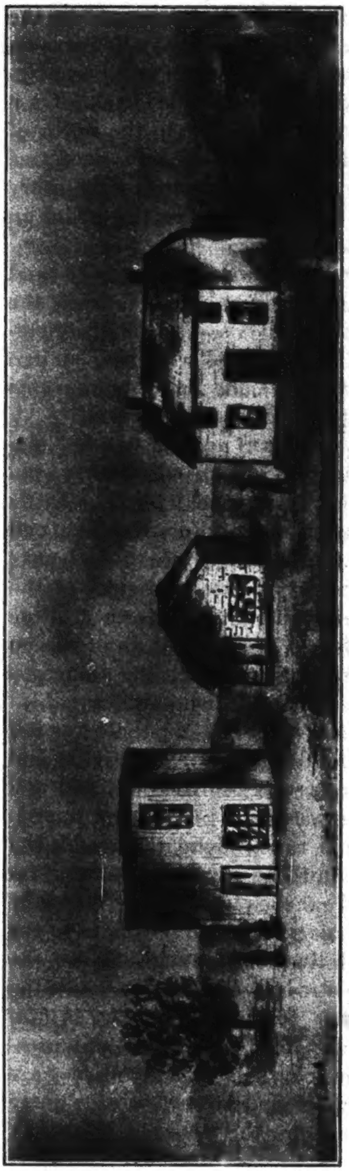
Way back in the spring of 1852, eight years before the establishment of the first daily central overland mail route, it is learned from the late John H. Clark, of Clay County, Kansas, who crossed there at the time on his way overland to California, "there was located on the east bank of the Big Blue, at Marshall's, a private post-office, a hotel, and a ferry—the business all under one roof. Kansas then was a part of Nebraska Territory. Letters written by parties on their way to California could be mailed there for the States, the price being one dollar for each letter. If there was any one in the crowd fond of an 'eye-opener,' he could get one for the modest sum of seventy-five cents. For a 'square meal,' the price was one dollar and fifty cents. For ferrying a wagon over the charge was only four dollars; and the owner did a rushing business even at these figures. In two and one-half hours on the morning of the 16th of May, 1852, forty wagons were crossed over the Big Blue river at Marysville, on the pioneer ferry, netting the proprietor $160."

Mr. Clark says further, continuing his trip overland from Marshall's ferry:

> "From an elevation, on the 20th of May, 1852, we first caught sight of the Little Blue river. A beautiful sight was that little stream, winding through groves of thick timber and small undergrowth, whose branches, dipping into the clear, silvery flood, presented a picture of sweet repose, altogether in accordance with our wishes. Happy were we to recline beneath such grateful shade and drink of its clear, sparkling waters. One day, while traveling up this stream, we overtook a train in distress—wagons upset, wagons broken, wagons altogether unfit for further progress; men and women fearfully demoralized; flour, bacon, household utensils, bedding and little children scattered upon the highway. I made inquiries as to the cause of the disaster, and was answered by one of the sufferers: 'The devil and Tom Paine! can't you see?' I frankly confessed that I could not see the gentleman referred to. 'Well,' said he, 'if you can't see, you can smell,' as he pointed an index finger to a small train of buffalo robes at the river bank, which was the cause of all the trouble. The foul smell of those ill-cured hides had caused the oxen to stampede and the destruction of valuable property was the result."

From Guittard's, about ten miles east of Marysville, there was a cut-off laid out in the fall of 1862 in a northwesterly course, about forty-two miles long. It left the main road about a mile west of Guittard's and was built across the prairie ten miles to Oketo station, on the Big Blue river. Oketo was also ten miles almost due north of Marysville. This new road was by the stage men known as the Oketo cut-off. Among the advantages claimed for it by the stage officials was that the new route saved several miles' travel, besides being a road in every way superior to that over which the stages ran through Marysville. The stage crossed the Big Blue at Oketo on a rope ferry. The next eleven miles was over the Otoe Indian reservation to Otoe station.

Eleven miles west of Otoe was Pawnee, a "home" station kept by George Hulbert, an experienced driver, and fourteen miles farther was Grayson's, kept by a driver named Ray Grayson. Ten miles farther was Big Sandy, another "home" station, kept Ed. Farrell, a little east of which D. C. Jenkins had a fine ranch



South side of KEARNEY CITY (DOBYTOWN), 1868. Piper & Robertson's store; boarding-house; saloon and restaurant.

and carried a stock of goods suitable for ranchmen and freighters. In the store was a post-office known as "Daniel's Ranch," over which Jenkins presided as Nasby. It was the first post-office west of Marysville, a distance of about forty miles. Around Big Sandy and vicinity it looked more like home than at any other station on the line between the Big Blue and the Platte river, a distance of more than 100 miles.

The next station west was Thompson's, kept by George B. Thompson. Fourteen miles beyond was Kiowa, in charge of Jim Douglas; thence twelve miles west was Little Blue, where a driver named Al. Holliday held forth; and thirteen miles beyond was Liberty Farm, on the north bank of the Little Blue river, 193 miles west of the Missouri river. This station was kept by a Mormon family, at the head of which was Jim Lemmon. The overland road lay along the Little Blue river for nearly 100 miles from where it first touched the stream, at a point in Jones county, Nebraska, a few miles east of Rock creek. The road left the stream a short distance west of Liberty Farm; then over the rolling prairie fifteen miles was Lone Tree. This station was on Nine-mile ridge, 208 miles west of Atchison, in southern Nebraska, between Liberty Farm and Thirty-two-mile Creek. On a quite lofty elevation, perhaps forty rods distant to the north of the road, there stood a solitary tree. It was a medium-sized tree and it could be seen quite a long distance from nearly every quarter. To parties engaged in freighting across the plains in the early '60's it was a prominent landmark.

The face of the country in the vicinity was rolling prairie, and the appearance of the single tree in a measure helped to break the monotony, not only for the freighters but also for the stage employees on the overland line. The name of the stage station here was very appropriately christened "Lone Tree." From this station it was fifteen miles west of south to Liberty Farm.

Ten miles farther to the northwest was another "home" station—a long, one-story log building—known as "Thirty-two-mile Creek," and it was quite an important one, too. The Little Blue river has its source not far southeast of Fort Kearney, and it is one of the finest streams flowing in southern Nebraska and northern Kansas. It is the most important tributary of the Big Blue, emptying into the latter at the thriving town of Blue Rapids, in Marshall county, Kansas. At frequent intervals on the stream there is excellent water-power, of which the numerous mills and manufactories along the banks furnish ample proof.

When I traveled the overland route, in 1863–'65, there was not a town in a distance of nearly 150 miles between Marysville and Valley City, the latter ten miles east of Fort Kearney, and vulgarly called "Dogtown." There were two post-offices, including Valley City, and an occasional ranch along the road; but ranches in the Little Blue valley in those days were few and far between. Those who had selected ranches in the early '60's were shrewd enough to settle on the choicest lands to be found in the valley, few dreaming they would live long enough to see the country settled up away from the stream. The region where the houses at that time were from five to ten miles apart is now thickly settled by wide-awake, industrious, intelligent and prosperous farmers. Several live, growing towns and cities have sprung up in the past thirty-odd years, and no section of country in the great West has finer prospects for the future.

The distance between Thirty-two-mile Creek and the Platte is twenty-five miles. Summit, the first station, was twelve miles. It was one of the most lonesome places in Nebraska, located on the divide between the Little Blue and the Platte, a distance of 230 miles from Atchison. Summit was the highest point on the overland route between the Missouri river and the Platte. Its elevation was approximated at something over 2000 feet above sea-level. From its vicinity the waters flow south into the Little Blue and northeast into the west branch of the Big Blue. The surroundings for some distance on either side of the station represented a region of sand-hills, with numerous deep ravines or gullies cut by heavy rains or waterspouts, and dressed smoothly by the strong winds that have been blowing through them almost ceaselessly for untold centuries.

Very little in the way of vegetation was noticeable at Summit or in the vicinity. It was a rather dismal-looking spot, uninviting in every particular; seemingly one of the most undesirable places on the line between Atchison and the mountains to build a station. Necessity compelled the stage men to choose this location, however, for the distance from Thirty-two-mile Creek to the Platte, twenty-five miles, was over a somewhat rough and hilly road, and it was too much of a pull for one team. Therefore the stage managers put in a station as near as possible at the half-way point, and the very appropriate name of Summit was given it.

Thirteen miles beyond Summit we had come into the great Platte valley. Here was "Dogtown," eight or nine miles east of Fort Kearney, and the surroundings looked more like civilization. Mr. M. H. Hook, the ranchman, was the station keeper. There was also a post-office kept by him under the name Valley City. The "city" contained three buildings, one being a store. The Platte river appeared to be a great attraction, not only to the weary pilgrims and freighters, but to the stage passengers who had traveled forty miles across the hills and over the divide from the Little Blue valley.

Going over the rolling prairies into the valley of the Platte, the surroundings suddenly change. Spread out before us is the wide but shallow river, running eastward to the Missouri, its banks at intervals fringed with willows and occasional belts of young cottonwood trees; the bottom covered with a rank growth of tall dead grass, presenting a decided contrast when compared with the last thirty or forty miles which we have just gone over in crossing the divide. Here the road from Nebraska City formed a junction with the old military highway. As we went on our way up the valley, and when within five or six miles of the fort, the military post seemed to cover a large area and show splendidly, with quite a number of apparently massive buildings. A near approach to the garrison, however, somewhat dispelled the scene, and, as the old stage-coach drew up in front of the station, we were instantly and for the first time on the overland route reminded that "distance lends enchantment to the view."

In an hour and a half after entering the Platte valley we are at Fort Kearney, the end of the first division on the great overland stage line, 253 miles from Atchison. We reached the company's headquarters about one P. M. of the third day, being exactly fifty-three hours out; thus making a fraction less than five miles an hour including all stoppages. Here was one of the best dining stations on the stage route, and passengers seldom passed it without stopping to eat.

Fort Kearney, in 1863, was a rather lonesome but a prominent point. It was a place of a dozen or more buildings, including the barracks, and was established by Government in 1849. It was in the '60's, as it had for several years before been, an important military post. Here it was that the stages and ox and mule trains westward from Atchison, Omaha and Nebraska City came to the first telegraph station on the great military highway, the wire to the Pacific having been stretched across the continent from Omaha in the fall of 1861. It was a grand sight, after traveling 150 miles without seeing a settlement of more than two or three houses, to gaze upon the old post, uninviting as it was, and see the few scattering buildings, a nice growth of shade-trees, the cavalrymen mounted upon their steeds, the cannon planted within the hollow square, and the glorious stars and stripes proudly waving in the breeze above the garrison.

The stage station—just west of the military post—was a long, one-story log building; and it was an important one; for here the Western Stage Company's routes from Omaha and Nebraska City terminated, and its passengers from thence westward had to be transferred to Ben. Holladay's old-reliable "Overland" line. It often happened, however, that passengers from Omaha and

FORT KEARNEY, NEB., 1864. Looking east.

Nebraska City by the Western's lines were obliged to lie several days at Fort Kearney before they could get a seat; those going from Atchison, the starting-point of the "Overland" line, having precedence over all others taken on at way points. Of course there was growling at times; some would storm and make vigorous protests; but that did not help the matter any.

Several times the ill feeling between the two lines had almost reached the point of fever heat. Often passengers from Omaha and Nebraska City who could not go through without lying over at Fort Kearney until they could get a seat in the "Overland" coach west complained bitterly. There was not enough business for two stage lines through to Denver; nevertheless there was strong talk that the Western, with its western terminus at Fort Kearney, seriously contemplated putting on an opposition line. There is little doubt, however, that, had such a move been carried out, it would have made matters rather interesting in the way of fast staging on the Platte; for it was well known for some time that no love existed between the two giant companies.

Had the Western stocked the route *via* the Platte valley through to the mountains, it is quite certain that it would have resulted, for a time, in the liveliest staging ever known in the country. The way of transporting passengers across the plains would have been second only to a lightning-express train, and the schedule would likely have been reduced to four days—perhaps three and a half—instead of six, from Atchison to Denver. The passengers wished something of the kind might happen.

Holladay was not at all uneasy about the growling and frequent threats of opposition. Backed as he then was by his millions, and making money in all his business enterprises, he had no fears of not being able to hold his own. He had the longest and best-equipped stage line in the world, and, with the overland mail contract at one million a year, he felt that he was able to meet all competition.

The Western company was shrewd enough to understand this; hence wise in abandoning the contemplated opposition line. In due time all differences between the two companies were amicably settled, and the Western sold its lines terminating at Fort Kearney and Holladay became the purchaser.

Two miles west of Fort Kearney was the worst place on the entire overland route. A town had been laid out and christened

"Kearney City." (It was called "Dobytown" for short.) It was a place of perhaps half a dozen sod structures, just outside of the fort reservation limits at the west. The buildings were occupied almost exclusively by the worst kind of dives, and a number of the people were disreputable characters of both sexes. The soldiers quartered at the post who drank bought their whisky at "Dobytown," and the large numbers of ox and mule drivers going across the plains seldom failed to stop there a few moments, to fill up on "tanglefoot," thus making it an immensely profitable business for those keeping such places. Freighters (the owners of the freight, especially) were always glad to get out of "Dobytown" and did so as soon as possible. There was a great amount of thieving done in the vicinity, and ox and mule drivers and those who had any money and who spent a night there, would be frequently drugged with the vilest liquor, robbed, and often rendered unable to go on westward with their trains the following morning. Hence, freighters would try to arrange their journey so they would never be obliged to camp in the vicinity of that disreputable place.

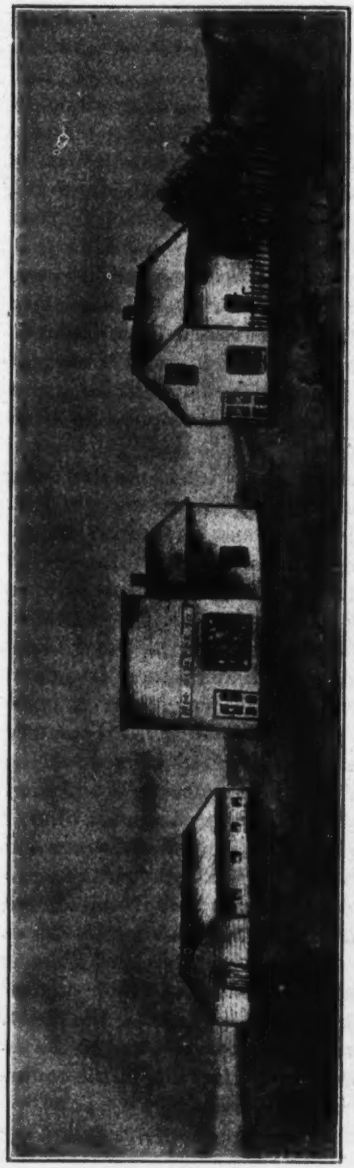
Westward, ten miles from Fort Kearney, was Platte Station; thence, eleven miles farther, was Craig (named for General Craig, of St. Joseph, Mo.); and fifteen miles more brought us to Plum Creek, an important "home" station, having a telegraph office and a store on the premises. Plum Creek was in the heart of the buffalo region, and before the extermination of the shaggy bison it was near this station that vast numbers of the animals came out of the sand-hills south of the river and slaked their thirst in the Platte. Buffalo-wallows could be seen in a number of places along the road west. The old-time stage-drivers told me that a few years previous they seldom passed Plum Creek without seeing immense herds of buffalo, and that at times it was necessary to stop the stage a while to let the animals pass! The enormous travel on the plains in the '60's, however, soon drove the buffalo southward, or rather held the bulk of them south of the Platte, and hunters in those days could go out a few miles south of the river and kill dozens of them. Nice, juicy buffalo steaks and choice, tender roasts were regular rations, prepared in excellent style, for those taking meals at the stations between Fort Kearney and old Julesburg, while traveling on the stage along the great Platte valley at that early date.

Willow Island was the next station west of Plum Creek, distant fifteen miles; then fourteen miles farther was Midway, so named because it was about half-way between Atchison and Denver. Midway was a "home" station, and in 1863 it was widely known as one of the best eating places on the Platte. Dan. Trout kept the stage stock, and his sisters, Lizzie and Maggie, had charge of the dining station; they could get up a "square meal" more quickly than any other ladies on the overland between Atchison and the mountains. The time-card was so arranged that Midway was not put down as a regular eating station, but the Trout girls were great favorites with all the employees on the stage line, and the drivers seldom passed there without inducing the passengers to stop for meals, if it happened to be anywhere near the hour for eating.

Fifteen miles farther west was Gilman's, and seventeen miles more brought us to Cottonwood Springs, in many respects one of the most important stations on the line, distant about 100 miles from Fort Kearney and 353 miles northwest from Atchison. It was a "home" station and nearly everything about the premises appeared homelike. It was likewise an important point or depot for supplies for the stage company, being midway between Fort Kearney and old Julesburg. In the vicinity were quite a number of buildings in addition to those occupied by the stage employees. Here also was an important telegraph office, the third one on the route west, after reaching the Platte valley.

Cottonwood Springs was a favorite camping point for freighters, because they could usually get what they wanted there in the way of supplies required on the slow journey overland. The cañons near by were full of cedar trees; hence there was plenty of the very best fuel, an important item for campers on the plains; besides, the premises looked very pleasant and inviting.

One of the most favorably situated ranches on the overland route was Jack Morrow's, about twelve miles west of Cottonwood Springs, and a little more than 360 miles out from Atchison. The location was near where the "Pathfinder" crossed the South Platte on one of his exploring expeditions, in the '40's. Jack went on the road at an early day and erected commodious buildings, and christened his premises the "Junction House," a very appropriate name, since it was located near the junction of the north and south forks of the Platte river.



VALLEY CITY (DOGTOWN), 1863. Stage stable, Gregory & Graham's store, and home of M. H. Hook, station keeper and postmaster.

Being an old-timer on the plains, Jack worked up an immense business at the Morrow ranch. He had excellent quarters—a large store building and residence combined—and was well prepared for comfortably entertaining man and beast. His store was a very creditable one for the frontier, and supplied freighters and pilgrims with such articles as they chanced to need while on the plains. Jack "stood in" with the Indians, so to speak; in short, he was a sort of "big mogul" among many of them. He had learned to speak their tongue fluently, and he never failed to keep his ranch amply supplied with the kind of goods required by the various tribes along the Platte. He bought of the Indians annually, in the way of trade, thousands of buffalo robes, elk, deer and antelope skins, dried buffalo tongues, etc. He was a great trader and would buy almost anything offered for sale, no matter by whom, but he always himself fixed the price.

Jack kept a large number of men employed about his premises, many of them herding cattle, a number of loose head being frequently picked up from stampedes. He was frequently spoken of, even in 1863, as one of the cattle kings of the great Platte valley. He had gone into that country early and secured control of an immense range for stock, and made a large sum of money during his pioneering there a third of a century or more ago. Not only was he a first-class trader, but he likewise enjoyed the reputation of being one of the shrewdest and best poker players on the overland route. It was often said of him by those well-acquainted that he made a good deal of money that way. Professional sharpers, well versed in most of the tricks of the gamblers, would frequently sit down to a "quiet game," in the hope and determination of fleecing the frontiersman, but at the finish Jack would almost invariably rake in the "pot." He had his faults; still he was a warm-hearted, genial fellow, and was known by reputation from the great Missouri to the great ocean.

A few miles west of Cottonwood Springs I had my first view of a couple of Indian graves, and they were to me a sight that will never be forgotten. It was the Sioux and Cheyenne country, not far from the junction of the north and south forks of the Platte. The graves were on the south side of the road, perhaps sixty rods distant, but they were to me an attraction—a sort of landmark—as long as I was employed on the overland stage line.

It was often said to have been an old-time custom of some of the Indians to bury their dead some feet above ground on poles set perpendicularly and held in place by bracing. Preparatory to going through with the last sad rites the dead body would be wrapped and sewed up in a blanket with a tomahawk, scalping-knife, and bow and arrows, in addition to the traditional "pipe of peace"; then all would be securely wrapped in a buffalo robe and tightly sewed up. The mourners and their friends, on the occasion of the funeral, would all congregate, and, at the appointed hour, gather around the sacred spot. The strange exercises would then begin, and with all the solemn dirges and hideous noises peculiar to the "noble red men," produced by their mournful chantings and outlandish sounding instruments, the body, with its accompanying paraphernalia, would be elevated to the receptacle prepared for it, and finally be left to take, in the course of time, its flight to "the happy hunting-ground."

We frequently saw Indians while making the journey up the

Platte. The lodges of the Pawnees and Sioux—in fact, nearly all tribes whose home was on the Western plains and prairies—were built of light poles set upright in circular form, around which were stretched buffalo robes which had previously been sewed together. Some of the lodges were unique and quite handsome. A permanent lodge built in good, substantial shape, would measure from thirty to sixty feet in diameter, and had a conical roof. The lodges were covered with sod, making them delightfully cool in summer and warm and comfortable in winter; these were principally those of the Pawnees.

It was fifteen miles from Cottonwood Springs to Cold Springs, the next station west; and fourteen miles farther was Fremont Springs, another "home" station. Elkhorn was the next stopping-place, eleven miles farther. It was only a short distance from O'Fallon's Bluffs, a locality known by every one on the plains before the building of the Union Pacific road. This point was despised by the drivers. There was a piece of road that the stages used to travel occasionally, when there were few passengers and but a light run of mail or express matter. During all my overland experience between the Missouri river and the Rockies, I only twice passed over that particular section of the road. For a few rods down through the sand-hills the road was at an angle of about forty-five degrees, and although the driver applied the brakes so tightly that they held the wheels, the team fairly flew down the steep and rugged, winding stretch. This rough piece of road saved quite a distance in travel, but during the latter years of overland journeying it was seldom used, every one taking the new road which had been laid out around the south side of the "bluff"; and, although long and circuitous, it was really the only safe one to travel during the Indian troubles.

The section embracing O'Fallon's Bluffs was undoubtedly the best place between the Missouri river and the Rocky Mountains for skulking Indians to hide and attack private parties or wagon-trains. Like Gibraltar, it was a natural fortification—a place that appeared impregnable. The soil was sandy and seemed to be cemented. The place looked as if it were easy work for a handful of Indians, or a few desperadoes, to hold at bay a company or a regiment of soldiers, or capture a stage-coach or wagon-train.

Just as we reached the Platte bottom, after going down through the "bluff" on the first trip, a party of about a dozen redskins, including a few squaws and papooses, attracted our attention. Several of them were on ponies and at first view we could not make out their purpose; but all were friendly, we soon found, and so we were not scalped or molested. We exchanged greetings by uttering the usual "How," and were similarly answered by them as we passed, they going east and we west.

While watching the dusky sons of the frontier, we were often reminded of the old and familiar stanza:

> "Lo! the poor Indian,
>   Whose untutored mind
> Clothes him before
>   And leaves him bare behind."

It was fourteen miles from Elkhorn to Alkali Lake, another "home" station, with a telegraph office attached—a dreary, desolate location—but quite a prominent point in connection with traffic during the days of overland staging and freighting.

Sand Hill was the next station, twelve miles west; and the next eleven miles brought us to Diamond Springs, another "home" station. South Platte station came next; then a run of fourteen miles brought us to old Julesburg, the end of the second division, 456 miles north of west from Atchison, and, the way the stages ran, about 200 miles from the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains.

Going over a stage road between 600 and 700 miles, it is not at all strange that on the way some difficult places should be encountered. In the distance there were quite a number of them, but the worst of all was in the sand-hills between Diamond Springs and old Julesburg. Here was quite a deep, rugged cañon, probably washed out by floods caused by waterspouts. It was a terrible looking place, and the stage boys called it "Devil's Dive." For a short distance on either side of the road there were high and almost perpendicular banks, and it took considerable nerve for one to sit on the box with the driver and ride through this dangerous looking place.

To go through, it was necessary for the horses to go on a run, in order to give the stage sufficient momentum to reach the top on the opposite side. In almost every instance the passengers would get out and walk through this bad place, the driver and messenger remaining on the box. On first looking at it, one would imagine it impossible for the stage to go through such a place with a load. But most of the stage drivers enjoyed it. Parties in charge of ox and mule trains, however, always went around the "dive" quite a distance to the south, because they could do that quicker than they could stop and hitch on double the number of teams, and thus, after the necessary delays, finally pull through to the opposite side.

Old Julesburg was a place that became historic. It was christened in 1859 for a man named Jules Beni, a Frenchman, who was a pioneer on the plains, having gone out on the frontier and cast his lot in that section in the later '50's. He made his home in the upper Platte valley, trading among the Indians. When Jones, Russell & Co. abandoned the stage route between Leavenworth and Denver known as the "Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express," which they laid out some distance south of the Platte early in the spring of 1859, they were forced to change it north in a few weeks, following the old military road on the south bank of this stream west from Fort Kearney to Denver. In establishing the various stations along the new route, one was built at the upper crossing, on the South Platte, opposite the mouth of Lodge Pole creek, about 450 miles west of Atchison.

In its palmiest days, during overland staging and freighting, old Julesburg had, all told, not to exceed a dozen buildings, including station, telegraph office, store, blacksmith shop, warehouse, stable, and a billiard saloon. At the latter place there was dispensed at all hours of the day and night the vilest of liquor at "two bits" a glass. Being a "home" station and the end of a division, also a junction on the stage line, and having a telegraph office in the southeast corner of the station, naturally made it, in the early '60's, one of the most important points on the great overland route. It was also the east end of the Denver division, about 200 miles in length.

Jules kept the stage station and was agent for the Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express Company for some months during that and the following year. He was quite a noted and conspicuous frontiersman in early staging days between the Missouri river and Denver and Salt Lake. On the plains he simply went by the name of "Old Jules." Where he kept this station the crossing of the South Platte was widely known as "Julesburg." The place was also known by many freighters on the plains as "Upper California Crossing." Here there were frequent troubles,

A BAND OF "NOBLE REDS" ON A JOURNEY. *Page 212.*

which first began in the spring of 1859. Being a sort of rendezvous for gamblers, for some time it was regarded as the toughest town between the Missouri river and the mountains. After Holladay came into possession of the great stage line, knowing the bad name that had for some time been attached to Julesburg, he subsequently gave the place the somewhat high-sounding name of Overland City.

Across the Platte, a few miles from the old stage station and the company's depot of supplies, a new town was laid out in the later '60's and christened the same name—Julesburg—when the Union Pacific railroad reached there. It was a "red-hot" frontier town, made up largely of tents and rough board shanties. In its palmy days it boasted several thousand inhabitants, large numbers of saloons, gambling-houses, and dance-halls. The town was short-lived. Lots at one time sold as high as $1000 apiece. Hardly a house besides the depot now remains. It is practically a deserted city. A portion of the site is grown over with sagebrush, and prairie-dogs occupy some of the streets of early days. In the lot used for a cemetery it is alleged lie the bodies of no less than "a hundred victims of midnight rows, violence, and vigilantes." In six months nothing of the new railroad "city" of Julesburg remained except the graveyard.

The Central Overland California Mail Company, whose stages forded the South Platte at old Julesburg, had the name of "Overland City" printed on the time-cards. It evidently looked as if they wanted to obliterate Julesburg from their list of stage stations. Still this name—Overland City—was seldom mentioned except by a few stage officials. In spite of everything that was done, the old name, Julesburg, clung to the locality, and so, in some sense, immortalized the old frontier Frenchman.

For two years or more following the campaign of Colonel Sumner against the Sioux and Cheyennes, in 1857, peace had reigned along the Platte, and a number of ranches had been from time to time opened in the valley, and a lively trade almost from the first grew up with the overland emigrants destined for Salt Lake, Oregon, California, and the vast territory embraced in the Pacific slope region.

While the business of opening up ranches along the Platte at that time appeared somewhat hazardous, and was attended with many risks, still there were a number of experienced, level-headed business men who were willing to take desperate chances, and risk, if need be, all they possessed, for the opportunity of engaging in a trade that promised, in a few years, to pile up for them snug fortunes. Jules was one of these men.

When the express line was moved up north to the Platte, Beverly D. Williams, of Denver—formerly of Kentucky, now of Arkansas—was given the general management of the Jones & Russell Stage Company's business. Jules was placed in charge of the station bearing his name that had been built on the south side of the Platte opposite the mouth of Lodge Pole creek. Socially Williams was one of the best fellows in the world, but as manager of a great stage company's property on the frontier he was not a success. He knew very little about the plains, it was said, and much less of the people residing there. He seemed to look upon every one whom he employed as honest, capable, and efficient, when in reality some of them were at heart scoundrels and thieves, who systematically stole the company's property. Because a man knew the plains over which the stages ran, Williams would venture to hire him as a station keeper. Thus it was that he had in his employ a number of unprincipled rascals, who really ought to have been boarding at the penitentiary instead of living at the expense of the stage officials.

Having been nearly bankrupted by what they believed bad management, the company decided to make a change, and Ben. Ficklin was employed as superintendent. He was a good man for the place, and one who thoroughly understood everything in connection with staging. There was no part of the overland route between the Missouri river and the Golden Gate with which Ficklin was not familiar. He was a man with force of character; likewise he had the "sand" and courage to carry out his plans. From the date of the change in management there was no longer peace and harmony.

One of the first important moves made by Ficklin on taking charge was the placing of Jack Slade on the road as a division superintendent, having charge of the Sweetwater division, extending from Julesburg to Rocky Ridge, on Lodge Pole creek. Naturally there were some "delinquents" on the line, and Slade exercised his prerogative and made them come to time. He was an untiring worker, at first putting in the most of his time night and day for the interest of the company by which he was employed, as well as doing everything he could for the comfort of the passengers. Special attention was given by Slade to the stage stations; particularly was this so with the one at Julesburg.

The discoveries made by Ficklin showed Jules to be a thief and a scoundrel of the worst kind. Jules was at once made to settle with the stage company. He made a vigorous protest, but had to liquidate, knowing there was no escape. But he was determined on revenge, and accordingly lay in ambush one day and gave Slade the contents of a double-barreled shot-gun, which the latter carried off in his person and clothes. The next stage that passed over the road had Ficklin aboard and his first duty was to hang Jules, after which he drove on. Jules, however, was not ready to die just yet. Before he had quite ceased to breathe some one came along and cut the rope, and Jules revived and fled from that part of the country, remaining for a time in obscurity.

But there was revenge in Jules's heart. He was bound to get even, and he never could get rest until he had obtained what he conceived to be his due. Going up on the Rocky Ridge road with a party of his sympathizers, it was not long thereafter until all sorts of depredations were committed on the stage company's property. How to stop these depredations was a matter of serious consideration. In the meantime Slade had recovered from the wounds inflicted by Jules, and Jules having been seen by some of the drivers, who informed Slade, he asked to be transferred to the scene of the depredations.

Knowing Slade to be a terror to all evil-doers, Superintendent Ficklin made the change. For some time Slade rode back and forth over the line, carefully surveying with his keen eyes every rod of the route. In due time he found where Jules and his cowardly gang were located. With a party of resolute, determined men, Slade came along one day and caught them off their guard. A desperate fight took place. In the engagement Jules was badly wounded and, with no power to resist, he was tied by Slade, and stood up against the corral, when his ears were cut off and nailed against the fence, and bullet after bullet was fired into his body. Thus ended the career of one of the worst men that, up to the early '60's, had ever infested the overland line. For weeks following this barbarous act, one of Jules's ears remained nailed to the corral, while the other, it is said, was taken off and worn by Slade as a watch-charm.

When Slade went into the employ of the "Overland" he was regarded, so far as known, as a fair sort of a man. He had driven, and was an experienced stage man—an important requisite—and no one on the line was ever more useful at the time. He had been a division agent, with headquarters at Fort Kearney. He was a sort of vigilance committee single-handed, and it was through his efforts that the line was eventually cleared of one of the worst gangs that ever held forth on the plains. Jules and his crowd having been effectually disposed of, and matters elsewhere having been attended to by Ficklin's orders, the line was shortly put in perfect order, and from that time on the stages ran with great regularity.

Joseph A. Slade was originally from Clinton county, Illinois. In the later '50's and early '60's, while employed on the "Overland," he often visited Atchison, and would occasionally have a "high, old time" when in company with some of the wide-awake stage boys. He was not the bad man at that time, however, that he afterwards turned out to be, for while in the employ of the stage company he was faithful to the trusts reposed in him.

But Slade, important as his services had been to the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company during the period of its darkest days, finally went the wrong way. He soon lost all character and was unable to bear up under all the excitement he had gone through. Surrounded by all the alluring temptations and vices of the frontier, he commenced drinking, and finally became a terror to those to whom, in the earliest days, he had been a most-trusted friend, and fell into the ways of the ones he had so long fought on the overland express line. A few years later he turned up in the Northwest, and soon was at the head of the most notorious gang of highway robbers and murderers that ever infested a civilized community. Apparently there was nothing too mean for him to do. But everything must eventually have an end. He had committed one too many high-handed acts of lawlessness. He became so bold he even defied the courts where he was living. His outrageous acts were more than the community composing a big mining camp could endure. They witnessed his acts until "patience ceased to be a virtue." He was arrested, tried and hung at Virginia City, Mont., by the vigilantes, dying like a coward. Such was the end of the notorious Jack Slade.

During the civil war, Ben. Ficklin, a Virginian, cast his lot with the South, the land of his birth. His energy, courage and superior business ability were devoted to supplying the Confederacy, during the "unpleasantness," with munitions of war. In this, it appears, he was quite successful, notwithstanding the blockade. At the close of the war, in company with General Armstrong, he was engaged in establishing a number of stage lines throughout the Southwestern states and Indian Territory. In a few years he had amassed a fortune. Every old overland stage man thought he was one of the best men they ever knew. His life was an eventful one, full of the most exciting and varied experiences. He died in Washington, by choking to death with a fish-bone at Willard's hotel, and thus ended the career of one of the pioneers of the "Great American Desert"—one who did much to help settle up and civilize what is becoming the richest and best section of our country.

Julesburg was for some time the most widely known station between the Missouri and the Rockies. It was reached the fourth day out. Both the station and stable were long, one-story, hewed cedar-log buildings; there was also a store and blacksmith shop; and here was the fifth and last telegraph office on the Pacific line between Atchison and the Colorado metropolis. It was at this place that the stages for Salt Lake and California crossed the south fork of the Platte. The Pacific telegraph line at this point also crossed the Platte, having been completed through to San Francisco *via* Fort Bridger and Salt Lake, the shortest and best route overland known in the early '60's.

In the spring of 1864, when nothing remained but the stage company's buildings and blacksmith shop, two wide-awake Western men conceived the idea that a rope ferry across the South Platte at old Julesburg would be a paying investment. At that time a big gold-mining craze was being inaugurated at Bannock, way up in the Northwest, and, in the opinion of the plainsmen, the natural place to cross the South Platte for the new diggings would be at Julesburg.

The mining excitement along the overland route was then running high, and thousands of men from all parts of the country had rushed off wildly, with the new Idaho diggings their objective point. Those who were in a hurry and had the means took passage by Ben. Holladay's overland stage as far as Salt Lake, but the majority went by private conveyance, for it was impossible for the stage line to carry one-fourth of the big rush. A great many crossed the river at old Julesburg and went up Lodge Pole creek, the shortest route then known to the new mines.

It cost ten dollars a wagon to get ferried across the Platte, and the enterprising men in charge raked in hundreds of dollars daily while the excitement lasted and the high water continued. There were many teams congregated at the river bank, and sometimes hundreds were waiting the seemingly slow movements of the ferry-boat, which was propelled by the current, and held to its course by a cable stretched across the river from the tops of high cedar poles set on either side of the stream.

The only way was to take turns about being ferried; the first to come and register were first served. Some who were so anxious that they could not wait their turn to get across the river abandoned the trip to the Northwest and went to Denver, and from there drifted into the Rockies and prospected in the Colorado camps, with no doubt just as good (if not better) success than they could have expected had they gone with the mad rush to Bannock.

While old Julesburg was a place that appeared a little isolated, it had a number of attractions. In the hills south of the station some distance from the river, on a commanding elevation, was a point called "Pilot Knob," from the crest of which the eye could take in a wide scope of country, including both the North and the South Platte rivers, Lodge Pole creek, the head waters of the Republican river, and miles of sandy hills and barren plains.

In the wide stretch of country thus presented to view, there was great variety of scenery and a number of charming landscapes, fit for the painter's brush or the camera of the photographer. It is told that from the summit of Pilot Knob the Indians, in early days, often gave signals, and their camp-fires, during those warlike times, have been noticed for many miles in all directions.

Fort Sedgwick, located five miles west of Julesburg, was an important military post or garrison, established in the fall of 1864, after the Indian troubles of a few weeks previous. The buildings were of sod and adobe. The point where the fort was located was 3660 feet above sea-level. Soon after the buildings were constructed the post was garrisoned by four companies of troops, among them the Fifth U. S. Volunteers, Second U. S. Cavalry, and Eighteenth regulars. Captain Neill of the latter was in command.

Buildings were not only scarce on the northern Kansas and southern Nebraska prairies, but they were few and far between along the Platte, especially on the south fork. Such a thing as a "cottage by the wayside" with anything like modern conveniences was unknown on the plains in the early days of staging and ox and mule traffic. There was great similarity in most of the structures, however, especially those used by the mail and express company.

A number of the ranchmen scattered along the route had buildings of similar design and make-up. They were nearly all simple, modest structures—more useful than ornamental. The rough as well as the hewn log cabin, likewise the plain sod or abobe building of inferior size—and all of the same general appearance—comprised a great majority of the few scattering houses built along the route for fully 500 miles.

Some of these rude structures were quite unique and decidedly picturesque; a few appeared quite cheerful; most of them, however, looked rather lonely, standing, as they did, near the bank of the river, along the seemingly barren, monotonous route across the plains. Occasionally one would notice a rather cozy-looking place, where lace curtains and lovely house plants adorned the windows, and where, in the summer season, a small flower-garden outside, with a few evergreens and shrubbery, broke the monotony and added not a little to the general appearance of the premises. However, these cozy locations were by no means numerous.

During the unprecedented overland traffic in the '60's, the warmest buildings along the Platte in winter and the most comfortable, because the coolest, in summer, were those constructed of sod and adobe, usually called 'dobe (doby). These buildings, during the Indian troubles on the plains in 1864 and 1865, had the advantage of being proof against the attacks of the savages. Most of them had strong and massive walls. Usually they were at least two to three feet in thickness. While the walls were fire proof they were also bullet proof. Likewise it is said that all such buildings are pronounced by the old-timers to be capable of resisting the strongest wind-storms that sweep across the plains. Those who had spent the most of their lives on the frontier believed them to be cyclone proof, and declared that, in their belief, nothing short of an earthquake could throw them down.

Properly constructed, as most of such structures on the road were, and by age firmly cemented, in a dry region like that along the South Platte, and in Colorado, Utah, and New Mexico, 'dobe buildings, it is believed, will stand for centuries. Structures of this kind, at frequent distances for hundreds of miles along the Platte river in 1864, passed unmolested through the numerous raids of the savages.

Fully three-fourths of the ranches on the route along the south bank of the Platte between Fort Kearney and Denver, during the freighting days by ox train, had buildings constructed of 'dobe pattern. Nearly all of such structures put up in the days of overland traffic, after the Indians made their disastrous raids, were of sod or adobe, and when I last saw them, in the spring of 1865, the most of them appeared almost as firm and solid as if built of rock. While the interior of many of these buildings was burned by the Indians during their raids along the Platte, the walls invariably remained intact. Such buildings, however, it is almost certain would never stand the climate of eastern Kansas and Nebraska, owing to the frequent rains and continued moisture, which in time would undoubtedly wear them away.

When business was growing so rapidly on the plains, in the fall of 1863, in consequence of the vast traffic just beginning to push across to the new Northwest mining camp at Bannock, an occasional wide-awake trader would go out on the overland route, open out with a stock of goods on the Platte, using a tent for the temporary display of his outfit until he could build a 'dobe structure, more suitable and permanent for future operations.

Eleven miles west of old Julesburg, along a somewhat rough road, was Antelope; and thirteen miles farther was Spring Hill, a "home" station, kept by Mr. A. Thorne; thirteen miles farther was Dennison's; and another twelve miles brought us to Valley, also a "home" station. Fifteen miles farther was Kelly's (better known as "American Ranch"); and Beaver Creek was twelve miles farther west. Then came the longest drive without a change of team on the road between the Missouri and the Pacific. It was Bijou, twenty miles from Beaver Creek; there being no suitable location between the two stations for another one. To

ONE OF THE EARLY STATIONS ON THE SOUTH PLATTE.

go over this long drive, where there was considerable alkali and sand and a number of sloughs, required some of the best teams on the entire line, and there were extra teams, so that all in turn would have a day's rest and none of them be overworked.

The next drive was likewise a long and tedious one—sixteen miles to Fremont's Orchard. Much of this distance was through beds of sand, and there was not a drop of water nor a tree or a shrub for the entire distance. On this drive a "spike" team was used; *i. e.*, five mules were hitched up, two on the wheel, two ahead of them, and the fifth hitched single in the lead. There was no going out of a walk on this drive, and no easy matter for the animals to haul a full load of passengers, with the express, mail and baggage that usually accompanied them.

It was a real pleasure, after going so long on a walk through such a dreary stretch of sand, to reach the "Orchard." There was quite a cluster of stunted cottonwood trees in the bottom that looked much like an old Eastern apple orchard; hence the name of the station. For years the trees furnished the station keepers and ranchmen in that vicinity all the fuel needed. A post-office was located here; the first one west of Julesburg, more than 100 miles east. Eagle's Nest was the next station, eleven miles west of the "Orchard."

Latham (first known as "Cherokee City") was the next station, and an important one it was, too. The distance was a little over 592 miles west of Atchison, and sixty miles northeast of Denver. Here was the junction of the stage lines for Denver and California, after the old Julesburg crossing was abandoned, in the fall of 1863, and here it was that the coaches for Salt Lake and points beyond forded the South Platte. It frequently happened that as many as three stages—coming from Atchison, California, and Denver—stood in front of Latham station. I have seen as many as forty passengers there at one time, going to Salt Lake and California, to Atchison and Denver, all having arrived within a period of fifteen minutes. Latham was only thirty-five miles east of Laporte, the first "home" station west on the "Cherokee Trail." Laporte was situated at the base of the mountains, where the Cache la Poudre, like a young cataract, gushes from the foothills and, flowing through a rich agricultural section, empties into the South Platte a short distance west of Latham. The next station was Big Bend, fifteen miles southwest of Latham.

Fort Lupton was the next prominent station. It was 625 miles west of the Missouri river and about twenty-seven miles down the South Platte from Denver. All the information gained in the '60's from the oldest ranchmen in that part of the country gave little light concerning the history of this old, dilapidated fort. It is known to have been built many years ago by a French trader, long in the confidence of the American Fur Company, from whom it derived its name. Maj. Stephen H. Long, with his party of explorers, camped on the present site of the fort July 5, 1820. Here it was, it is said, that Colonel Fremont started on his northern tour of exploration, in 1842.

In the early part of the civil war the land on which the fort stood was purchased by a man named David Ewing. The ruins of the old structure remained quite conspicuous as late as 1865, nearly a half-century after it was founded.

The fort was built of adobe brick made on the ground. The walls, which enclosed an area of about 150 by 125 feet, were fully fifteen feet high and some four feet thick at the base. A bastion twenty feet square, provided with port-holes, stood at the southwest corner, and for a long time was a conspicuous part of the old structure. At the northeast corner was a tower about the size of the bastion, from which an unobstructed view of the surrounding country was had for a considerable distance in all directions. The Snowy Range was in plain sight, while Long's Peak and Pike's Peak, more than 100 miles apart, and towering, each, to a height of over 14,000 feet above sea-level, were important landmarks, visible from Fort Lupton to all persons crossing the plains before the days of railroads west of the Missouri river.

Inside the adobe walls of the old fort were buildings to accommodate the trader and his employees, the wagon-train, and a well. While no one appears to know the exact date when the fort was built, adobes have been found, taken from the walls, with wolf and other tracks on them. Many years ago an inscription was found by the owner on the timbers in the tower, with a list of twenty persons, believed to be the names of employees who built the defenses, as early as 1818. The place subsequently became of historic interest.

During the excitement following the Pike's Peak gold discoveries, in 1858, which led to the establishment of the Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express to Denver, in the spring of 1859, and later, while the overland stage line was in operation, in the '60's, considerable portions of the walls were yet standing, and apparently in pretty fair condition, as late as 1865, when I last saw them. Now hardly anything remains of the historic old fort, the walls of which were such a conspicuous landmark for a decade or more during the days of ox and mule freighting and staging across the plains, years before the first railroad was built between the "Big Muddy" and the Rocky Mountains.

There were several choice ranches in the vicinity of the old fort in the early '60's, and since then the adjacent country has become valuable. It is a perfect garden in many respects—one of the most prolific sections of Colorado in the South Platte valley. Every year the land is increasing in value. No less than seven artesian wells were put down in the immediate neighborhood during the winter of 1896–'97, which supply the vicinity with abundant water and give assurance that the locality will be greatly improved in the future.

Fifteen miles west of Fort Lupton was Pierson's, the last station on the Platte route between Atchison and Denver. The road from Pierson's to the city was, for the most part, a hard, smooth bed of gravel, and for much of the way no paved street of asphalt could furnish a finer thoroughfare or one over which a team could haul heavier loads or make better time.

To get a view of the glorious old Rocky Mountains, the lofty elevation some two miles above sea-level which stretches from north to south, and marks the dividing line of the continent, was what I long had desired. My wishes were not gratified, however, until a little after breakfast on the morning of January 27. It was at Kelly's Station (the "American ranch"), 135 miles down the Platte, a little northeast of Denver. The distance was about 150 miles in an air-line from the Snowy Range, but it did not appear to be twenty-five miles. That was my fifth day out from Atchison. I shall never forget the event, for it made a lasting impression on me. Long's Peak, towering up 14,271 feet above the level of the sea, its summit covered with a silvery-white mantle, showed off in grand style. The atmosphere on that occasion was remarkably clear. Before night Pike's Peak was visible, more than 100 miles to the southwest. Scores of other lofty elevations along the continental divide appeared before my vision as plainly as if only a few miles away. The mountains were thereafter constantly in sight all the way to Denver. It was the finest view I had ever seen. It was a charming landscape—a panorama of grandeur and magnificence. I doubt if any grander scene exists in the whole world. I was fairly enraptured by the sights I had for the first time gazed upon.

While going up the great Platte valley on a Concord four-horse stage-coach towards the grand old mountains at a gait of five or six miles an hour for twenty-four hours, the sight of over 100 miles along the snow-capped "back-bone of the continent," the sun shining in dazzling splendor on the white mantle, it seemed as if we would never reach them. When in sight of and within a few miles of Denver, it appeared as if the city was little more than a stone's throw from us, and that it was built at the base of the mountains; yet, when we reached the "giant young city of the plains," the foot-hills, which appeared to be little more than a short morning's walk distant, I was surprised to learn were fully fifteen miles away. But the handsome view west and southwest of the city, representing the beautiful chain of mountains, with the summits snow-capped, spread out for a distance of over 150 miles north and south, with Pike's Peak over seventy-five miles away to the south, and Long's Peak sixty-five miles northward, presented what seemed to me to be one of the most charming landscapes human eye ever gazed upon, and one that it would be impossible for any artist to produce with the brush.

On that first trip there was no snow in the Platte valley between Fort Kearney and Denver, but there was considerable dust at intervals. I was agreeably disappointed to find such a mild, congenial atmosphere for the entire 400 miles of travel along the south bank of the river. Neither was there any snow between Atchison and Fort Kearney, but the weather along the Platte was delightfully pleasant—very different from what it was the morning I started out. I stood the journey well, but I was so tanned on my return, after an absence of two weeks and such a long outdoor ride, that it was remarked that I looked like a "wild Injun." There could be no discount on the fact that I was "done brown," but some of the reminiscences connected with that first trip I shall never forget.

In just six days from the time I started out from Atchison on my first trip the stage rolled into Denver, on Sunday morning, January 29, 1863. We went into the city west on Larimer street to G (Sixteenth) street, thence north two squares, across McGaa (Market) to the southeast corner of Blake street, where the driver pulled up at nine o'clock at the company's office in the northwest room of the old Planter's House.

Inside of fifteen minutes after the arrival of the stage, from 500 to 1000 men had gathered about the Planter's, and for a time it was about as lively around the premises as is a sugar barrel in midsummer. The crowd was in every respect a promiscuous one, composed of almost every class of citizens; the masses being made up of collegians, embryonic statesmen, preachers, lawyers, aspiring politicians, slaveholders, abolitionists, bankers, merchants, mechanics, clerks, farmers, teamsters, laborers, ranchmen, stage-drivers, miners, prospectors, mule-drivers, and bull-whackers, while there was a sprinkling of gamblers, saloon-keepers, desperadoes, criminals, fugitives from justice, etc. It was a crowd characteristic of the Western frontier; such an one as had probably never before assembled except in the early days of San Francisco and in the great mining camps throughout the mountains.

O. J. GOLDRICK.

As soon as I had checked off my "run" at the office, Prof. O. J. Goldrick, Denver's noted pioneer newspaper reporter, was the first stranger to greet me in search of the news along the overland line. He was on the staff of the *Rocky Mountain News*. Soon afterwards I made the acquaintance of William N. Byers, founder and editor-in-chief of the pioneer paper. Each individual around the Planter's, though plainly dressed, appeared to be on a par with his neighbor. It was a cosmopolitan crowd of frontiersmen, but everything about the premises, aside from the talking by the vast throng, was quiet and peaceable. The weather was the most lovely ever known in midwinter, the atmosphere being perfectly clear, the sun shining beautifully, and not a breath of air stirring. To the west, northwest and southwest the mountain peaks, rising to a height of between two and three miles above sea-level, were covered with snow, presenting a scene as lovely as could be imagined. But no one could have dreamed that it was Sabbath morning. The sound of the church-going bell had never been heard in Denver. The whole crowd was apparently discussing the latest war news just brought by the messenger and passengers, only six days from the States.

The daily overland stage-coach of more than a third of a century ago appeared to create ten times the excitement in Denver that is now created by the arrival of the many trains on the various lines of railroad that to-day center in the "Queen City of the Plains." In the early '60's the banker and the minister of the Gospel, like the plain laborer and the bull-whacker, wore blue or gray woolen shirts, and it was just as difficult to pick out a capitalist from the crowd as it was to designate a plain prospector, a miner or a ranchman by his garb. Denver had no millionaires in the '60's, but a dozen or more of her then prominent merchants and shrewd business men, worth from $10,000 to $25,000 each, long ago amassed large fortunes, and many years since passed the million mark.

I shall never forget the time that I first saw Denver. There were very few brick buildings in the city then, and there was not one of more than two stories in height. Blake street was the principal business thoroughfare at that time, fully one-half of the big stores being located on that street; but most of the buildings were frame, and few of them only were more than one story high. Gambling-houses, a number of them run by Mexicans, were numerous on that street, and they ran night and day, for seven days in the week. The largest and most high-toned ones had an orchestra connected, and vast crowds assembled there at leisure hours. "Bucking the tiger" appeared to be the liveliest business going on. There was considerable Mexican whisky disposed of in Denver in the early '60's. At the Mexican gambling-houses on Blake street, where one of the favorite games they played was "Spanish monte," the vile whisky, some of which was drank by the overland stage-drivers, was by them given the very appropriate name of "Taos lightning."

Many who tried the game "just for luck" would soon become wiser and poorer. The Mexican bull-whackers were numerous, and played the games for all there was in them. Sunday appeared to be the busiest day at such places. It was likewise true that almost every business house and shop, every theater, every dance-hall and every dive in the young city kept open doors on Sunday, the same as any other day, for nearly all the miners, prospectors and ranchmen in the vicinity came in to spend the day and make their purchases.

F street (since changed to Fifteenth) had several first-class banking-houses, prominent among them being the ones kept by the well-known Kountz Bros.,, from Omaha, and Clark, Gruber & Co., from Leavenworth. The mint—quite a prominent building—was on McGaa street, where it yet stands, though very much enlarged and improved over the original plan, as built by the Leavenworth bankers. J. H. Langrish, one of the pioneer theatrical men of Colorado, had gone out there (after playing several nights to full houses in Atchison). He played alternately between Denver and Central City, and was a great favorite in these Colorado camps for many years. For a time he occupied the commodious theater building on the east side of G street (Sixteenth), a few rods south of Larimer street, where stood on the southeast corner for several years the old Broadwell House.

This corner is now, and has been for many years, occupied by the commodious Tabor block, at the time it was built the most elegant and imposing block in the city. The post-office was in a brick building on the north side of Larimer between Fifteenth and Sixteenth. The now millionaire banker, Hon. D. H. Moffat, jr., who was twice a passenger (east and west) on the stage with me across the plains in the summer of 1863, then kept a news and stationery depot in the post-office building. The Brown brothers (J. S. and J. F.), who were prominent freighters from Atchison during the '60's, had an extensive grocery house, on the south side of Blake street near Fifteenth. Stebbins & Porter, also from Atchison, had one of the largest grocery establishments in the city, on the north side of the same street, as did also the Cornforth boys, who were pioneer merchants in the long-time defunct town of Sumner (once the home of Albert D. Richardson and John J. Ingalls), on the Missouri river, three miles below Atchison. The Cornforths pulled out from Sumner in the later '50's, soon after the Pike's Peak gold excitement broke out.

A prominent landmark of early days was the old "Elephant corral," between Fourteenth and Fifteenth, on the north side of Blake street, a little east of Cherry creek. It was an important rendezvous for freighters in the early '60's. N. Sargent kept the Tremont House, just across the creek on Ferry street. Hon. P. P. Wilcox, who went out from Atchison in 1861, was police judge for some time, and he was a terror to all evil-doers and law-breakers.

The pioneer newspaper of Colorado, the *Rocky Mountain News*, started in 1859, had its office in a building in the bed of Cherry creek when I first saw and visited it, on the 30th of January, 1863. It was a plain two-story frame structure. There was not a drop of water in the creek then, and the oldest inhabitant had never seen it except when it was as dry as the ordinary church contribution box. The bed of the "creek," several rods wide, then nothing but a barren stretch of sand and gravel, told more plainly, however, that at some remote period water had been running there; how long since no one dared to venture, and the recollection of the oldest Arapahoe Indian in the vicinity failed to throw any light on the subject.

Even at the early date of January, 1863—having been established nearly four years—the *News* was a well-equipped printing establishment for a frontier paper, and it issued a very creditable daily, considering that it worked under so many disadvantages in the way of getting the news. To be sure it had a press franchise, but its telegraph dispatches were taken off the Pacific company's wire by the operator at old Julesburg, the nearest point on the line, and brought into Denver by stage a distance of about 200 miles. Its four or five presses were in the basement (on the ground floor) of the building, and the compositors occupied the room above, on the same floor with the editor and reporters.

The paper was printed on a Washington hand-press—a regular old "man-killer," the "cylinder" not having yet made its appearance in Denver. The material of the *News* office was purchased in Chicago, of the well-known firm of Rounds & James, then the western branch of the noted Johnson type-foundry, of Philadelphia. There were not to exceed 2500 people in Denver at that time; still there was another daily paper, the *Commonwealth*, on which the late Albert D. Richardson and Col. Thos. W. Knox for a time did editorial work, in the early '60's. It was published on the south side of Larimer street, across Cherry creek, in the second story of a frame building.

The Pike's Peak mining excitement in a measure having subsided, the *Commonwealth* was finally obliged to suspend; the great cost of publishing a daily in Denver at that early date, with the meager support given, did not justify the publishers in longer continuing their paper.

The first meal I ate in Denver, a Sunday dinner at the Planter's (the overland stage line headquarters), was between three and four hours after my arrival in the city, as heretofore mentioned, January 29, 1863. I have often thought, and think to this day, that it was one of the finest meals I ever sat down to in Colorado. The house was kept by the genial Col. James McNassar, a prince among landlords at that time. An elaborate bill of fare had been prepared, to which ample justice was done by the very large number of guests. Among the articles of food served were mountain trout, buffalo, elk, antelope, roast turkey, chicken, duck, grouse, etc.

The Planter's was a two-story frame structure, but it was then considered the only first-class hotel in the city, and received fully three-fourths of the better part of the traveling public. McNassar was one of the most hospitable landlords in the Rocky Mountain region, and was highly esteemed as a citizen of Denver, and counted his friends by the thousands. When he retired from the Planter's he was succeeded by John Hughes, a prominent citizen and a popular hotel-keeper. Colonel McNassar died at Salt Lake in the early '90's. The old, historic Planter's, which stood for about a quarter of a century as one of the early landmarks of the Rocky Mountain metropolis, was finally torn down in the later '70's to make way for a more imposing and substantial building.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PLATTE VALLEY, FORT KEARNEY, ETC.

THE Platte is a wonderful river. For several hundred miles before it empties into the Missouri it is a very shallow stream, and in many places it has the appearance of being a very sluggish stream. It has a sandy bottom, and the channel frequently shifts from one locality to another. Within sight of Fort Kearney, where the stream ran through the military reservation, there were scores of islands in the early '60's. Some called that vicinity "The Thousand Islands." In some places the stream is from one to two miles wide, and one can easily wade it except when it is on its annual "rise."

Along its banks, at intervals of a few miles, in the early days, there were occasional belts of young timber, the cottonwood predominating. There were frequent groves of willows on the islands for hundreds of miles and Willow Island was the name of one of the stage stations about fifty miles west of Fort Kearney. The few resident trappers, pioneers, traders, and ranchmen, followed by the steady march of civilization westward, soon thinned out most of the timber. Farther up the stream, along the north and south forks, was a vigorous growth of sagebrush and cacti, in the early '60's, but freighters and pilgrims grubbed out much of the sage-brush for fuel. Where the south fork branch gushes out of the cañon at the east base of the Rocky Mountains the stream is quite a torrent, clear as crystal, and almost ice-cold. It is only a few feet in width at the eastern slope, and, in places, a person can, with the aid of a pole, easily leap across from bank to bank.

Fort Kearney, Nebraska Territory—long since obliterated from the maps and the last vestige of the old place gone—was located a little east of the ninety-ninth meridian. Concerning its establishment, the sketch, printed on the following pages, prepared by Mr. Moses H. Sydenham, the pioneer and so long old resident at that post, is reliable, and probably one of the best accounts ever written of it.

FORT KEARNEY, NEBRASKA, 1864. Looking west.

"The establishment of Fort Kearney, or Fort Child, was the first settlement by civilized man in central or western Nebraska; this being under the direct supervision of the war department of the United States.

"An act of Congress was passed, and approved May 19, 1846, giving to the war department the necessary authority and means to survey or make observations from the Missouri river to the Rocky Mountains; to ascertain certain facts and define and locate a military road to facilitate communication with our western territories—Utah, Oregon, California, etc.

"To this end an expedition was fitted out, and placed under the command of Col. Stephen Watts Kearny, who marched through the Indian country and procured all the desired information for the war department, and, on his recommendation, a site for a fort was selected for a military post to defend the fast-increasing overland travel to the rich lands and gold deposits of the Pacific slope and mountain regions of the great West.

"To carry out the recommendations of Colonel Kearny, a requisition was made on the governor of Missouri for a battalion of five companies of mounted volunteers for garrison duty, etc. This battalion rendezvoused at Fort Leavenworth during the summer of 1847, and on the 5th of September took up their line of march to the designated site of the post on the Platte river, the first military station *en route* to Oregon. The battalion was under the command of Colonel Powell, and consisted of 454 men. The command halted at Table creek, about the 15th of September, near the place where Nebraska City now stands, for the troops to winter. On April 24, 1848, the command broke camp and proceeded to their objective point on the Platte river valley, where they established the military post designed, named Fort Child, in honor of Brigadier General Child, U. S. A., whose gallant conduct at the battle of Cerro Gordo, Mexico, brought him into distinction. This Missouri battalion remained at the new post until October, 1848, when their term of service expired and they were relieved by companies G and I of the Mounted Rifles, under the command of Captain Ruff.

"In December, 1848, by order of the war department, the name of Kearney being given, in honor of Stephen Watts Kearny, colonel of United States dragoons, for distinguished service in the Mexican war. Through the name being misspelled by some one at the war department, or the post-office department, giving the name of the post-office the original name of 'Kearney,' it has been spelled that way from the time I first took charge of the Fort Kearney post-office, in 1856.

"The fort was originally designed and built for about four companies of soldiers—two of infantry and two of cavalry—something less than 200 men; besides the soldiers there were usually a large number of civilians, who were employed by the quartermaster as teamsters, mechanics, clerks, etc.

"The post-office at Fort Kearney was established in the later '40's or early '50's, and kept going a long time without a regularly commissioned postmaster. The department finally said they could n't stand it any longer, and that a postmaster must qualify properly or the office would be taken away. So Col. Charles A. May, in command at the fort, and all the officers, joined in recommending me, and I was appointed and commissioned in 1858, by Hon. Joseph Holt, Postmaster-general under James Buchanan.

MOSES H. SYDENHAM.

JOHN HETH.

"I first took charge of the office under J. Heth, who was postmaster, but who had never qualified. All together, I held the office at Fort Kearney and vicinity for about fifteen years. With the exception of a little more than a year in 1863-'64, while absent on my ranch at Hopeville (near Seventeen-mile Point, west of the fort), I held the office at Fort Kearney until the abandonment of the post, in 1871, after which I was made postmaster at Kearney City, two miles west of the fort, and the name of which I had changed to Centotia, and was its postmaster until 1878.

"In the summer of 1863 the post-office at Hopeville was established, about one mile east of Seventeen-mile Point stage station, and I was appointed postmaster. This office was continued until the Cheyenne Indian war broke out near Plum creek, early in August, 1864.

"I was appointed route agent on the Union Pacific road in 1878, and continued in the service until 1894. My 'run' was from Omaha to Ogden; distance, about 1000 miles.

"The adobe building I occupied while postmaster at Fort Kearney I built myself, doing with my own hands most of the rough work. I was afterwards allowed quarters in a Government building just north of it, into which I moved the office, and lived in another room next north of it, with my mother and sisters, then afterward with my own wife. I was married in September, 1866."

Some writers insist that Fort Kearney was thus christened as a compliment to Phil. Kearny, the well-known commander and renowned Indian fighter of pioneer days. But this is not so, as has been shown by Mr. Sydenham. In the period of overland freighting and early staging on the Platte, the post was spoken of by many of the old-timers on the plains as "New Fort Kearney."

The first officer in command at Fort Kearney, on the Platte, planted shade-trees, and did much other work to help beautify the grounds and give the premises a cheerful appearance. In January, 1863, when I first saw the post, the trees had been set out for ten years or more, making the place look really inviting. The attractiveness of the locality was much enhanced by the fact that we came to it by a stage ride of about 250 miles, much of the way over rolling and treeless prairies. Most of the original buildings were of sod or adobe, but these were subsequently replaced with handsome frame and hewn-log structures.

The military reservation comprised a tract ten miles square. Originally the land belonged to the Pawnee Indians. The reservation extended eight miles east of the military post and two miles west of it. The north border was across the Platte a short distance. It was a very handsome tract, a portion of it slightly elevated above the surrounding country, so that from almost any place near the fort the eye could take in a large scope of country east, south, and west. Timber skirting the banks of the Platte cut off a view of the country to the north. Concerning one of the pioneers of the Platte valley Mr. Sydenham writes as follows:

"When I first came to Fort Kearney, in the winter of 1856–'57, John Heth was the post sutler and a member of the firm of Heth, Dyer & Co., the trading company who owned the store at the fort. When I was on my return to Fort Leavenworth from Fort Laramie, after staying bewintered at the Ogalalla Sioux camp for seven weeks, and traveling 160 miles on the ice of the Platte river for sixteen days, on the 9th day of February, 1857, our party of thirteen men—on Government service—came off the river onto the land at Fort Kearney. That night another severe blizzard came up and blew the lodge over that I was sleeping in, and I lay buried under the snow all that night and most all the next day. The terrific storm lasted over two days and nights, and buried under all the one-story buildings and haystacks. In that storm Mr. Heth's clerk was going from the mess house to another house close by, before dark, but he missed his way in the fine snow that flew around everywhere, and wandered off into the hills and perished. The Pawnees found his remains some miles from the fort three months afterwards. Mr. Heth came to our party to get a man to take the place of the young man who perished. I quit the Government contractor's service to stay at the fort in the place of the young man—at about one-third less wages, too.

M. H. Sydenham's store at Hopeville, Neb. (near Seventeen-mile Point), west of Fort Kearney, 1864.

M. H. Sydenham's residence at Hopeville, Neb., 1864.

"Mr. John Heth was post sutler, and usually did what he could to entertain the officers and help make time pass pleasantly with them at that frontier post. I generally did most of the trading and what else there was to do about the store. Mr. Heth was a brother of Capt. Harry Heth, of the Sixth United States Infantry, through whose influence Mr. John Heth got his sutlership. Capt. Harry Heth was afterwards a major-general in the Confederate army during the civil war; Mr. John Heth was relieved of his sutlership early in the war because of his Southern political opinions, he being a Virginian. He never left Nebraska, however, and was afterwards in the hardware business in Nebraska City, and afterwards a commercial agent for an Omaha business house. He died some years ago at Omaha, leaving a wife and two sons and a daughter, who, I believe, are still in Nebraska. Mr. Heth was of a social disposition and was very well liked by the military officers at the fort."

No place on the eastern division of the overland route was more full of interesting history than Fort Kearney. When riding on the stage—it mattered not whether going east or west—I was always glad when the old coach had approached near enough to the fort so that I could get a sight of the flag floating above the garrison. On reaching the place going west, I knew that a little more than one-third of the distance from the Missouri river to the mountains had been covered; and, when going east, I was aware that nearly two-thirds of the way had been gone over between Denver and my eastern destination. In going out from Atchison, when the Platte valley was reached, we were fairly out upon the plains, most of the old military road for 250 miles southeast of Fort Kearney having been laid out, regardless of section lines, over the rolling prairies of northern Kansas and southern Nebraska.

The fort was built on the old Oregon route. Including the barracks, a dozen or more buildings made up the Government quarters at the old military post in 1863. A few of the buildings were of sod or adobe, but the houses occupied by the officers were substantial and quite cozy frame structures, being neatly painted, and had a pleasing appearance, built so far out on the frontier.

Among the attractions surrounding the military headquarters in the early '60's were rows of cottonwood shade-trees, the saplings which developed into them having been planted to help beautify the lonely spot in the later '40's. They had grown to be nice trees in the early '60's, when I first saw them. In two and one-fourth years afterwards—April, 1865—they had made considerable additional growth; and now, after more than a third of a century has gone by since I last saw them, it is said that the trees have become young giants, one of them measuring ten feet or more in circumference.

Less than forty rods distant to the west from the fort were the buildings owned by Ben. Holladay, the stage man, which were used for an office, eating station, storehouse, barn, stable, etc. The stage company's buildings were very plainly constructed—more useful than ornamental. The most of them were built of cedar logs, hauled by team more than 100 miles, and well answered the purposes for which they were used.

In the rushing days of overland freighting and staging it always appeared to be a lively spot around Fort Kearney. All the vast traffic of the plains by the Platte Valley route went across the military reservation and within a short distance of the old Government post. Hundreds of white-covered "prairie schooners" were daily seen on the great highway. Long trains, heavily loaded with every description of freight, and hauled by oxen, mules, and horses, could be seen going west or east at almost any hour of the day. Concord stages, carrying passengers and the great overland mail rolled in daily from Atchison, Omaha, Nebraska City, and California, and usually there was a busy throng composed of the army of stage men, passengers, freighters, drivers, soldiers, and a promiscuous crowd generally.

In the early days of Fort Kearney there was considerable timber growing on the islands adjacent, the most of which was afterwards cut down and converted into lumber and used in the buildings which in the later '50's replaced the early structures made of sod and adobe. Hook's station, afterwards vulgarly called "Dogtown," was located a little east of the military reservation, near the south bank of the Platte, something over eight miles from the fort. The Pawnee Indians claimed the land on which the fort was built, and Colonel May, in command of the post in 1859, ten years after it was built, arranged the preliminaries, and soon the Government was in possession of the "ten-miles-square" tract, the Indians in the meantime securing quite a large body of land near by, embracing their old and favorite home, adjacent to their hunting-grounds. It is alleged that, in making the treaty with the Indians, assurances were also given them that Government would establish and maintain schools for the education of their children, in which they should like-

Post-office and post buildings at Fort Kearney, 1864.

Sod building at Centoria, adjoining west line of Fort Kearney Military Reservation, 1864.

wise be instructed in the ordinary branches of agriculture. "Uncle Sam," however, forgot to make good those promises.

The traffic on the plains over the old military highway had grown to be immense long before the country through which it passed was settled, except in a few localities. As many as 500 heavily loaded wagons a day have often been counted as they passed the fort, many of them with supplies for Forts Laramie and Bridger, besides great numbers destined for merchants in the Mormon capital. In six weeks during the spring of 1865 a count was kept, showing that no less than 6000 wagons, each loaded with from one to four tons of freight, had passed the Government post, bound west. Nine hundred of them passed in the last three days of the count.

Except for the travel that passed Fort Kearney in early days, it was at times very lonesome for the officers quartered there. A monthly stage route from the Missouri river *via* Forts Laramie and Bridger furnished them their mail, but afterwards this was increased to semimonthly, and later to once a week. Soon came the pony express, which was shortly followed by the telegraph from Omaha, and, not long thereafter, the great stage line from St. Joseph and Atchison, carrying the first daily United States mail overland to the Pacific shore.

At the outbreak of the civil war the feeling at Fort Kearney was about equally divided. The Confederacy had many earnest sympathizers at the old post, and at times the discussions became heated, but nothing serious occurred. While the war was raging at the front, a number of officers stationed at Fort Kearney whose sympathies were with the South left, and joined the army in the land of their birth.

There was a good deal of Indian fighting in Nebraska in the '60's, and nearly all operations by the military were conducted from Fort Kearney, the main base of supplies west of Omaha and Fort Leavenworth, on the old trail which followed the Platte. The First Regiment of Nebraska Volunteers was ordered to Fort Kearney in 1862. In 1864 the Seventh Iowa Volunteer Cavalry was ordered to the frontier, and did excellent service protecting the overland stage line. Squads under command of a sergeant, being stationed at intervals of a few miles along the Platte between Fort Kearney and west of old Julesburg, would escort the mail stages from station to station.

It was a serious mistake that there were not more troops stationed on the Platte and Little Blue rivers, for they would doubtless have prevented the horrible murder of scores of innocent men, women and children and saved from destruction millions of dollars of valuable private property, not less than a half million being lost by Ben. Holladay alone through the treacherous savages.

Dobytown, located two miles west of Fort Kearney, is spoken of by M. B. Davis in an article published December, 1899, in the Omaha *Bee*, as follows:

> "Just west of the reservation sprang up a collection of huts and hovels known as 'Adobe Town,' sometimes shortened to 'Dobytown,' and also called Kearney City. It is related that the place at one time had fourteen saloons, though there were only six families there. These saloons were, of course, sustained by the custom of travelers. A detailed history of Dobytown would have a weird sort of interest, no doubt, if all facts could be brought to light. A little further west and near the river is a close thicket of cottonwoods, enclosing the spot where once stood a house. The place was on the old stage road, and was called 'Dirty Woman's Ranch,' with a due regard to the fitness of things. Travelers were often lodged here over night, and if those trees could speak they could tell some wild, weird tales.
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> "After the close of the war, in 1866, General Pope, commander-in-chief, visited Fort Kearney. He was much pleased with the location, and under his orders great improvements were made. A steam sawmill was set up, logs were brought from inland, and numerous buildings were erected. The next year General Sherman succeeded General Pope, and he made a tour of inspection of the Platte valley. While at the fort General Sherman rode out with Colonel Carrington, the post commander, together with officers and ladies of the fort, to view the country. As they rode through Dobytown some one from within one of the squalid little houses hissed the party. Very soon after the general avenged the insult by ordering the abandonment of the post. An urgent protest from settlers who feared to be left without protection resulted in one company of troops being left at the fort, and from that time it remained a one-company post until it was permanently abandoned, in 1871."

Ne-bras-ka was the original name of the river, given it by the Otoe Indians, who lived near where it empties into the Missouri. Ever since the first French trappers came into the valley it has been known simply as the Platte. The two names, however, are synonymous.*

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*Mrs. E. G. Platt, of Oberlin, Ohio, was long with the Pawnees, as teacher in the missionary schools. She wrote me, August 22, 1899:

"I lived with the Pawnees when the territory (Nebraska) was named, and spoke their language, so am free to say Nebraska is not a Pawnee word; but a gentleman who had lived some years among the Otoes and spoke their language fluently informed me it is an Otoe word, which literally translated is *weeping water*, the stream upon which lies the town of Weeping Water being (by the Otoes) named 'Nebrathka' because of the sad tones of its waters as they rushed over their rocky bed." WM. E. C.

STAGE STATION AT FORT KEARNEY, 1862. Coaches from Atchison, Omaha, and Nebraska City.

In the language of Washington Irving, who wrote in 1832: "The Platte river is the most magnificent and most useless of streams. Abstraction made of its defects, nothing can be more pleasing than the perspective which it presents to the eye. Its islands have the appearance of a labyrinth of groves floating on the waters. Their extraordinary position gives an air of youth and loveliness to the whole scene. If to this be added the undulations of the river, the waving of the verdure, the alternations of light and shade, the succession of these islands varying in form and beauty, and the purity of the atmosphere, some idea may be formed of the pleasing sensations which the traveler experiences on beholding a scene that seems to have started fresh from the hands of the Creator."

Artemus Ward, who crossed the plains on Ben. Holladay's overland stage in 1864, soon afterwards wrote something of the peculiar stream. It was the opinion of the noted humorist that "the Platte would be a good river if set on edge." The stream was also described by Bill Nye as "having a wide circulation, but little influence."

During the unprecedented flood in the spring of 1864, now and then could be seen a small party in a flatboat, who took advantage of the freshet and, to save the great cost in stage fare, made the trip by the water route from Denver to Missouri and Kansas. They were often seen by passengers from the stage-coach, sometimes hunting and fishing for the necessaries of life, at intervals on the way. While several hundred dollars would be saved to the party on the stage fare, the trip was a long and tedious one; still there was considerable romance connected with it, and this alone was worth making the novel journey.

Some writers were so enthusiastic in the '70's that they wrote of the probabilities of making the Platte a navigable stream. It was fully demonstrated, however, years before that it was not a navigable stream even for light-draft flatboats. While there was little risk of ever striking a snag, boats making the trip down frequently ran on sand-bars, even during high water, and the occupants would often suffer much inconvenience before getting off.

The water in the Platte all the way down through eastern Colorado and Nebraska was almost as muddy as the Missouri river; hence not a very inviting stream to look upon. Quicksand, as many know who have forded the stream, also abounds in many places; and much of the time during the fall and winter a considerable portion of its bed is nothing but a vast stretch of dry sand. Often freighters and emigrants, destined for California and Oregon in early days, would experience vexatious delays in fording the river on account of the quicksand, which would frequently detain them for hours in making the somewhat hazardous trip across the broad, treacherous stream.

The stage-drivers, so familiar with the Platte in the days of the overland mail, used to say that during the floods in that stream the water would seldom leave its banks. Notwithstanding the banks are very low, they are also composed of quicksand, and, as the water would rise, naturally the banks rose with it. It is said the banks in places have been known to rise with the water several feet, apparently floating, thus preventing the river from leaving the channel except in extraordinary floods.*

When I first crossed the plains there were several farms already opened along the Little Blue river, but I do n't think there was as much as a respectable-sized garden spot under cultivation at any of the various ranches along the Platte between Fort Kearney and a few miles east of the mountains. Where the old military road emerged from the rolling prairies and sand-hills and entered the Platte valley, a few miles east of Fort Kearney, the great highway afterwards skirted the south bank of the stream most of the way west to the Rockies. Along this wide and shallow river, except in a few places on the south fork, for 400 miles the Government thoroughfare was seemingly as level as a floor.

A considerable portion of the country along the Platte, however, is rolling by turns. In places often were visible a range of mounds—"mountains in miniature"—in plain view to the north and south of the river, apparently a "solidified wave of the almost boundless prairie ocean." These mounds are yet visible in the heart of the great agricultural and farming region of the valley. Surrounded as they are with such splendid ranches—practically the garden spot of the state—and with so many large

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*"At the Wyandotte convention, the line of the future state was drawn at the one-hundredth meridian, which was supposed to be on the borders of the desert region. An attempt was made to annex to it all south of the Platte, and delegates from Nebraska were in attendance to urge it. One of them, a Mr. Taylor—in whom the annexation idea seemed to penetrate the whole essence, from his brown coat to his corpus callosum—urged that the Platte river had a quicksand bottom and could not be forded; it could not be bridged, because you could not find bottom for piers; and it could not be ferried for want of water."—*Col. Wm. A. Phillips.*

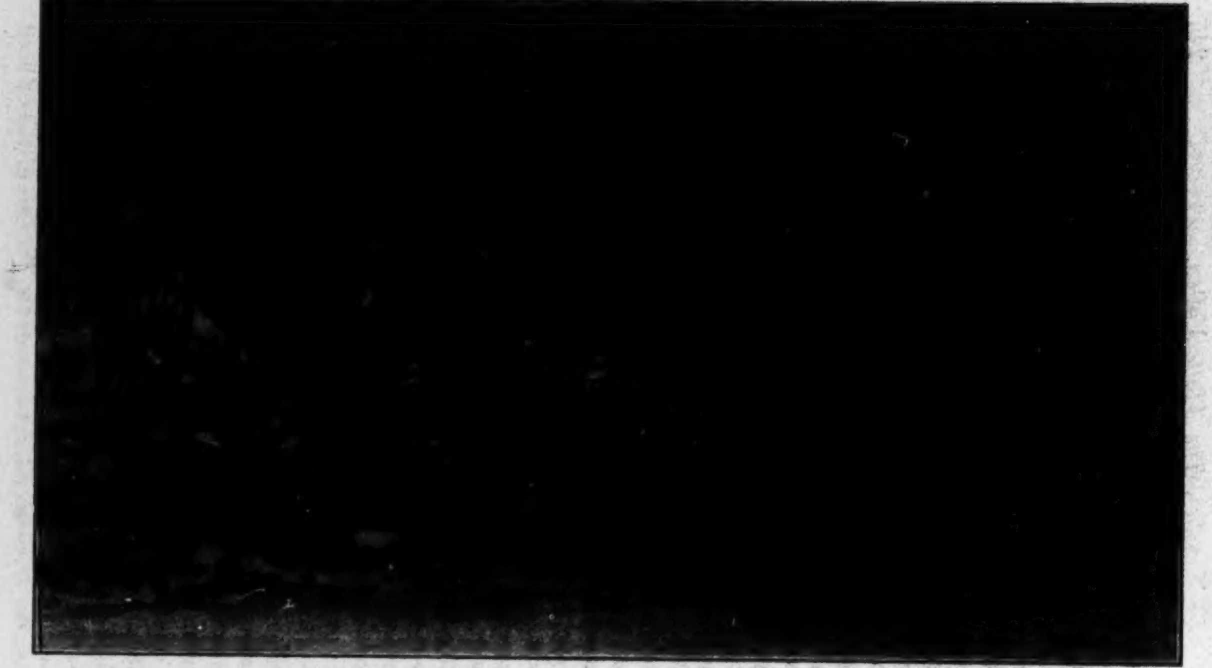
bunches of fine cattle, no section of country in the great West, or anywhere else, for that matter, has been more remunerative to the tiller of the soil or those engaged, since the days of the buffalo, in producing the choicest beef for the various markets of the country.

Along the South Platte from O'Fallon's Bluffs west, much of the country for more than 250 miles was, for agricultural purposes, believed by many to be the worst part of the overland route east of the mountains. A considerable portion of this distance appeared a sort of worthless sandy and alkali region, good for nothing except stock-raising, although there were, at intervals, many places where the bottom extended back a considerable distance south from the river. The most of this region, however, as was afterwards learned when the ranchmen began irrigating, proved to be of the very best for the growing of nearly all kinds of grain and vegetables and many choice varieties of fruit.

What a mighty change in scenery was noticed as one would make the long trip of upwards of 400 miles by stage along the Platte from the eastern border of the military reservation at Fort Kearney into the mountains. From plains that appeared almost a water level, the scenery would finally change to seemingly almost impenetrable cañons and gorges, while the precipitous rocky cliffs and peaks, with their snow-capped summits, extended thousands of feet far up into cloudland.

In some places the great valley was several miles wide, with rich meadows on either side of the river; then, again, the sandy or rocky bluffs on the south side of the stream would extend to near the water's edge, along which the old road had been laid out and over which the overland stage and all the teams crossing the plains traveled. While staging on this route in 1863–'65, there was hardly an island or a grove of timber or willows on the river for several hundred miles with which I was not familiar. There was hardly a tree on the "Overland" between Fort Kearney and Denver that I could not locate when the mail was carried across the continent by the Concord stage-coach.

Returning from Denver by stage one dark night a little after midnight, in the fall of 1863, and while coming down the Platte valley between Fort Kearney and Hook's station, we met with an accident that might have resulted seriously. By some means which the driver could not account for, the line of the off leader



NARROW ESCAPE FROM AN ACCIDENT ON A DARK NIGHT. *Page 212.*

broke, and the team, a rather spirited one, suddenly dashed ahead and left the road. The driver, Mr. Ed. B. Kilburn,* immediately took in the situation, and thought pulling steadily on the line that held the near lead horse would cause the animals to run around in a circle, and, finally, come to a stop. Every time around, naturally the circle grew a little smaller. The brake was out of gear and comparatively useless. For a time the horses went at full speed, the coach spinning around like a top. It was plain that, when two or three more circles were made, the coach would be overturned, and, quite likely, some one injured.

It happened that there were no passengers on that trip between Fort Kearney and Atchison, all of them having left the stage at the fort and gone to the Missouri river by the Omaha route. I alone occupied the inside of the stage, and was having a glorious sleep when suddenly I was awakened by the runaway. Knowing the situation was becoming serious, the driver called me to jump out on the near side and take the leaders by the bits. This I was enabled to do by the dim light of a candle burning in one of the stage head lamps. But before I succeeded, however, in seizing the animals and bringing them to a standstill, the stage, in its short turns, was going around on the two near wheels. It was an exciting moment and a very narrow escape from upsetting, and the only mishap of the kind I ever experienced during all my trips across the plains.

Having succeeded in stopping the horses, I took one of the head lamps from the coach and started out to search for the road. The night being dark and foggy, I could see only a few rods ahead. Several times I lost my bearings and was obliged to yell out to know the whereabouts or direction of the driver. Hence it was several hours before I found the main road, having walked around over the same ground a dozen times or more, aggregating several miles. The driver himself confessed that he could not tell whether we were north or south of the stage road, and not until the break of day, when the surrounding landmarks began to be visible, did we discover which way was east and which way west.

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*ED. B. KILBURN was one of the oldest and best drivers on the "Overland." He was a man of medium build, an honest, faithful and obliging employee, always at his post, and was never known to shirk a duty. On a score of occcasions, for hours at a time, I have sat on the stage box and ridden with him day and night, along the Little Blue and up and down the Platte. No braver man ever held the reins of a stage team. He never knew what it was to fear danger; but in four years after that gloomy night, and only two years after I last rode with him between Denver and Julesburg, he met a horrible death by being shot from the stage box by Indians, on the morning of June 6, 1867, while driving for a few days down the South Platte, about 125 miles east of Denver. He had gone down the road as far as Godfrey's ranch. After breakfast, when he was about ready to start with the coach from Godfrey's, one of the stage boys jokingly said to him, "Ed., look out for your scalp." He removed his hat, smilingly remarking, "The Indians don't want this old gray hair of mine." After the stage had gone about two miles down the river and was opposite an old adobe wall, a band of Indians lying secreted behind the wall fired a volley into the vehicle and Kilburn fell dead. There was only one passenger on the stage at the time, and he managed some way—no one can tell how—to make his escape. When found, the body of Kilburn was badly mutilated, every piece of clothing but his gloves having been stripped from his person. On one of his fingers was a heavy gold ring, a present from his faithful friend and companion driver, Sam. Getts. In due time a brother of the dead man came and the remains of poor Ed. were taken back to the old family home at Lansing, Mich.

It was genuine sport for some of the stage passengers, even while moving along at a lively gait, to pull their revolvers and shoot out of the windows of the coach at a herd of antelope perhaps a few hundred yards distant. Often two or three persons would be peppering away at the same time, but it was a rare occurrence if any one of them was successful in bringing down one of the swift-running animals. The experience was just about the same with jack-rabbits and coyotes. It required only one shot into their ranks to send the fleet-footed animals bounding away, and in a few seconds they would be off beyond the reach of flying bullets.

Snakes were numerous on the plains. On one of my trips up the Little Blue valley in the summer of 1863, while riding on the box alongside the driver, I noticed a queer sight on a gopher hill, a rod or so only from the road. It was near sunset, and we were bowling along at a steady gait when I asked the driver to stop. With revolver in hand I got down and went back a few rods to investigate. Approaching the spot cautiously, I saw a good-sized gopher being slowly but surely crushed in the folds of a big snake. Cocking my six-shooter I steadily advanced, and, when within a few feet of the spot, the serpent quickly raised its hideous head and opening its jaws darted a forked tongue towards me. Taking deliberate aim with my old-reliable "44," I fired, the bullet cutting the reptile in several places as it plowed its way along its coiled form. The gopher's death was a speedy one, also, the bullet having done its work thoroughly.

Later during that same year (1863), way up on the South Platte, as the stage was in sight of the Rockies, I noticed in the tall weeds and dry grass by the side of the road, a monster snake nine or ten feet in length, and with its mouth wide open. I got down and walked back a few rods and took a peep at the reptile. Taking careful aim, I fired into the snake's mouth. In an instant there was a terrible crashing among the dry weeds, which caused me to believe that the monster had been badly hurt; still I had no time, even had I so desired, to stop and make an investigation; so I immediately climbed up on the stage and again took my place on the box with the driver and departed.

Along the Platte, in 1863 and 1864, I shot quite a number of rattlesnakes, and one set of rattles I have kept to this day which I prize quite highly as a souvenir of overland staging days. Rattlesnakes were more numerous than any others on the upper South Platte between thirty and forty years ago, and, in consequence, the popular antidote for snake-bite had a great sale.

In connection with my first trip by the overland stage-coach, I witnessed a grand and beautiful sight that I shall never forget. It was late in the afternoon of the 27th of January, 1863, in the South Platte valley, between Alkali Lake and old Julesburg, upwards of 400 miles west of the Missouri river. The air was cool, but the sun shone with dazzling brilliancy. Sitting on the box with the driver, as we were making good time up the valley, suddenly, a few miles beyond us to the west, there loomed up in the distance something that appeared to resemble a lake. Going a short distance farther, the scene changed, and there appeared a number of buildings, only they were above the horizon and inverted. It was one of the strangest and, to me, one of the grandest sights I had ever beheld. The farther we traveled towards it, the more the "houses" appeared to change and present an altogether different appearance. I was completely enraptured by the sight and it was some time before I could take my eyes from it. Perhaps I ought to add that I was also dumbfounded.

I did not like to expose my ignorance to the driver on my first trip overland, but I was so completely nonplussed that, pointing in its direction, I finally asked him if he could explain the strange objects in the distance. "That," said the driver, "is mirage." This was something new to me, but I had read a little about it in books and papers when a boy, and had since noticed a few pictures purporting to represent the remarkable phenomenon as it appeared at sea, when vessels could be seen apparently floating upside down, seemingly in space above the waves, as if reflected by a mirror. However, I little dreamed of having the pleasure of seeing such a sight myself, especially on what was then called the "Great American Desert."

One of the most interesting attractions caused by the strange phenomena, on the Platte, some time later in 1863, was a vast herd of buffalo, apparently grazing on the range, some distance to the south of the river. The sight was one greatly admired by all the passengers on the stage-coach. It was a genuine treat, for many of them for the first time in their lives imagined they were almost in shooting distance of the shaggy bison, and soon would be within a stone's throw of them. Every few moments it seemed that they were gaining on the "sights"; but, as they passed on, it was observed somehow they never would get any nearer to them, when suddenly they would vanish.

Time and again I viewed with delight the strange and remarkable phenomenon in the '60's along the Platte route. As time passed by I finally became so accustomed to the strange sights, from my frequent trips on the great stage line, that nothing strange was thought of them. Still, it was always a source of pleasure to gaze upon the apparently charming lakes fringed with forest-trees, the beautiful buildings and castles which would break the monotony of the plains, and many other objects which would for a moment appear, and, just as quickly, vanish like the mist. Such scenes cannot be accurately described; no pen can vividly picture them; the wildest imagination fails to comprehend them; they must be seen before even anything like a correct conception of them can be obtained.

Located on the frontier, not far from the route of the Overland Stage Company's Line, in the early '60's, there was a fellow from Kansas who was known quite widely in the vicinity as "Ranger" Jones. He resided a few miles from the base of the eastern slope of the Rockies, in plain view of Long's Peak and the Snowy Range. He claimed to be, and doubtless was, an old plainsman and pioneer resident of the great West. If he had not lived long enough out on the frontier to gain a residence as an honorable, law-abiding citizen, he certainly had been there a sufficient time to enjoy a reputation among his neighbors as a first-class prevaricator. Jones spent a Sunday on the South Platte, near the Cache la Poudre, at Latham station, in the spring of 1864, and I had several hours' conversation with him. To tell the truth, I soon

MEETING AN UGLY LOOKING ENEMY. *Page 250.*

discovered, seemed almost an impossibility with Jones, but for downright lying no one would question his ability to double discount any one on the overland line.

While the station keeper, stock tender and a couple of drivers and two or three ranchmen were all passing away the time telling stories on that Sunday at Latham, the "Ranger," just before starting home, told a yarn with all the solemnity possible. I had already discovered that he was a smooth, quite graceful story-teller. All in the room was as quiet as death, while each person sat attentively listening to one of his blood-curdling "personal" experiences. Having finished, for a few seconds all was continued silence, until a jolly fellow who had had not a little exciting experience as a driver on the plains and in the mountains looked the big story-teller squarely in the eye and remarked:

"I hope, 'Ranger' Jones, that you don't expect me to believe this story."

Looking the experienced driver closely in the eye, Jones, after dwelling a few seconds, said:

"Well—no—really I don't. The fact is, I have lived out here in this Western country so long, and have been in the habit of telling so many d—d lies, the truth of it is, now, that I don't know when I can believe myself."

Almost endless changes have taken place on the old overland road since those days of staging, and freighting with ox and mule teams. The sights along the route, however, are not enjoyed by the traveler to-day as they were nearly forty years ago. Now the tourist sees the region only for a brief time from the car window, as he is whirled across the continent in a palace coach in two days by the pioneer Union Pacific railroad. In the days of the Concord stage, nearly three weeks were consumed in the long journey from the Missouri river to the golden shores of the Pacific.

The beaten highway along the Platte valley, over which hundreds of thousands of oxen, mules and horses annually trod, was almost constantly lined with white-covered prairie-schooners. Hundreds of teams daily passed along it. Ranches from ten to twenty-five miles apart furnished the tired teamster and weary pilgrim a place of entertainment at night, after the long, tedious day's drive. Frequently the way was obstructed by immense herds of buffalo, which almost daily crossed the old overland highway and slaked their thirst in the Platte. The Indians rode up and down the valley, and their wigwams were pitched sometimes near the foot of a cañon or gulch, but more often close to the bank of the river, convenient to some trading post.

There were many nice things to admire on the long stage ride. Much of the scenery was picturesque beyond description. In a good many places there was much sameness, but the monotony was broken by the large number of charming landscapes; the rolling prairies, decked with a profusion of lovely wild flowers; the broad Platte, with such a large number of islands, many of which were covered with a grove of willows and young cottonwoods; the bluffs at the far edge of the valley, near the crests of which was an occasional growth of cedar; cañons and gulches at intervals, down which coursed lovely streams of various sizes; the alkali plains, along which were visible thousands of bleached-white skulls and skeletons of the buffalo; numerous prairie-dog towns, living in which were countless numbers of the harmless little animals; ranches and trading posts at convenient distances; Indian tepees scattered for hundreds of miles along the Platte valley; the grand old Rocky Mountains, gazing on which none would tire, their sides verdant with evergreens, their lofty summits crowned with perpetual snow. The sights were so grand that no one could fail to admire them. For tourists and travelers it was a genuine feast, and they greatly enjoyed it; the artist never failed to find something about it useful for the brush; and the invalid seemed to recuperate, slowly gaining renewed strength while moving along and gazing upon the beauties presented in nature's grand panorama.

The Indian troubles along the overland mail route in August, 1864, the worst experienced on the line, were largely confined to the Platte valley. They extended from Junction, on the upper South Platte, within eighty-five miles of Denver, for over 300 miles down the valley, and about 100 miles southeast of Fort Kearney, on the Little Blue river—a distance of over 400 miles east and west. The attacks were made by bands of Cheyennes, Sioux, Kiowas, and Arapahoes.

On the Little Blue, in southern Nebraska, an entire family of ten persons were massacred and scalped. One of the women, after enduring inhuman barbarity, finally suffered a death of the most horrible torture imaginable. Other fiendish butcheries were also committed along the Little Blue at Liberty Farm, Pawnee Station, and near Oak Grove, their field of operations extending east to Big Sandy, within about 150 miles west of Atchison. West of Fort Kearney some thirty-five miles nine persons were murdered, and two women and two children captured and carried away by the savages. Their train, consisting of ten wagons, was burnt. Four men were killed ten or twelve miles east of Cottonwood Springs and about a dozen wagons captured, a portion of the goods plundered, and the balance, with all the wagons, destroyed. The cattle and other stock were stampeded and driven off by the Indians.

In the several depredations committed along the Platte, in which so many people were killed by the savages, a vast amount of merchandise of all kinds was destroyed. Besides, the fiendish red devils stole and ran off several thousand head of cattle and mules. The amount of stock and property taken and burned was variously estimated at near one million dollars.

On the eastern division of the stage line, between Big Sandy and Thirty-two-mile Creek, every station but one was burnt by the Indians. This was a terrible visitation, and in justice to the large number of employees of the stage line, as well as for the safety of the stock and other movable property, the company was obliged for several weeks to abandon the stage route for fully 500 miles, leaving their hay, grain, provisions, household furniture, etc., a prey to the savages. Nearly every ranchman's house between old Julesburg and Big Sandy was deserted, and the old Indian traders, who were familiar with the dark, peculiar ways of the treacherous butchers, were forced to leave their places and hurriedly join the ranchmen who, with their families, were taking refuge at the nearest forts along the Platte, leaving their cabins and other property to the mercy of the fiendish murderers.

Nothing could be done at the time looking to the early opening of the stage line for traffic. Nearly all the stations having been burnt, no stages could run until new ones were built, and before this could be done it was necessary to make a number of important changes in the route. Along the Little Blue river in southern Nebraska a new station was built at the west end of Nine-mile ridge and the name of Buffalo Ranch was given it. Another station was put in called Pawnee Ranch, and accordingly Liberty Farm was abandoned. Lone Tree was likewise discontinued and Elm Creek made a new station. It was deemed

A FAMILY RETURNING TO "THE STATES" BY THE PLATTE ROUTE. *Page 245.*

advisable, also, to dispense with Thirty-two-mile Creek station, and a new one called Muddy was substituted. Summit was also abandoned, and the stages westbound afterward ran through to Hook's (Valley City post-office), the first station reached on the Platte, a distance of about fourteen miles, without a change.

These troubles caused by the Indian raids proved a terrible blow to the commerce of the plains. The great overland California mail, which for over three years had been running daily with almost the regularity of clockwork, was now seriously interrupted. Hundreds of wagons loaded with grain, provisions, merchandise, etc., were obliged to corral at convenient places and remain for weeks along the route. The flow of emigration westward suddenly stopped, and business of nearly every description along the overland route for several weeks was at a standstill.

It was learned at the time from a few friendly Indians who had straggled into the forts that they had met and conversed with marauding bands of hostiles, from whom the information was gleaned that they were fearful of the enormous paleface emigration westward, and that they (the Indians) would soon lose all their land. The land, they declared, belonged to them exclusively, and it was their intention to again get possession of it and hold it, even if they had to kill every white man, woman and child to accomplish their purpose.

But those days of trouble and danger from Indian raids are long since passed.

As early as 1869 there was an agitation for the removal of the national capital to Fort Kearney, an account of which we take from the graphic pen of Mr. M. H. Sydenham:

"About the years 1869 and 1870, the question of changing the site of the United States capital was largely agitated in the Eastern states, and various cities were putting forth claims for consideration to have the nation's capital located in their neighborhood, among which were St. Louis, Mo., Keokuk, Iowa, Council Bluffs, Iowa, Chicago, Ill., etc.

"As I was then publishing the *Central Star* at Fort Kearney, to make known to civilized people in eastern lands the merits of western and central Nebraska as a suitable land for settlement and development, the idea came to me that I ought to advocate the Fort Kearney military reservation as the most suitable site for a new national capital, it being just the size of the District of Columbia—ten miles square. I therefore set forth and published the suitability of the reservation for that purpose, with all the reasons why, defining my position with explanatory maps, etc.

"To bring the matter squarely before the Congress and people of the

United States, I placed the subject in the form of a proposition to our statesmen in Congress, making every allowance for the fact that they would doubtless do something different to the proposition, if any action was taken on the subject at all. I proposed that, if they would pass an act locating the United States capital on the Fort Kearney military reservation, and make me special commissioner to put up new public buildings, and grant for the purpose the Fort Kearney military reservation (which was about to be abandoned for military purposes) and 64,000 sections of unclaimed lands from any portion of the public domain for sale or use, I would lay out the city of 'New Washington' on the site of the military reservation, and put up all the necessary or required public buildings out of the *proceeds of the sale of the lots and lands*, and have a large overplus to deposit besides in the United States treasury—I to receive, as compensation, one per cent. of all money received from said sale of lots and lands outside of those for public use as stated.

"I advocated the policy of changing the capital from the circumference to the center of the republic in my paper, the *Central Star*, copies thereof being sent to all our members of Congress and to all leading and influential public men throughout the nation, as well as to leading newspapers.

"Public sentiment was soon worked up on the subject. A national capital removal convention was called to meet at Louisville, Ky. I was appointed by Governor Furman a delegate to that convention from Nebraska. The result of the convention was the bringing up of the matter in Congress, its reference to a committee—the report of which was a majority against the removal at that time. This was the last time that any action has been taken by Congress on the subject of national capital removal.

"My proposition to change the capital and make the city of New Washington on the site of the Fort Kearney reservation was based partly on the following grounds, viz.:

"First. It would give an immense impetus to the development and settlement of the central plains of the republic, then unoccupied, as also of the great mountain regions of the West.

"Second. It would greatly stimulate the business of our Eastern cities, as all have grown up on the development of the West, and they would all equally grow and thrive.

"Third. It would be a means of creating a new capital, more conveniently situated for all people, without any money expended, and also put money into the national treasury.

"Fourth. It would be entirely safe from bombardment by a hostile power, it having been destroyed once before, and in possible danger of a similar fate again.

"Fifth. It would draw closer together in bonds of harmonious unity all sections of the republic.

"Letters from leading public men from various parts of the country were received by me, in which they expressed themselves as well pleased with the measure. Governor Gilpin, of Colorado, who also had previously advocated Denver for the national capital, expressed himself as well pleased with my proposition, it being the most feasible and acceptable of any.

"Leading editors spoke encouragingly of it. The Chicago *Times*, the Cincinnati *Times* and other papers gave long articles on the subject of a favorable character.

"The publishers of the *Land Owner*, of Chicago, the then most prominent real-estate journal in the United States, sent on for my engravings to insert in their journal, and gave a full-page article on the subject.

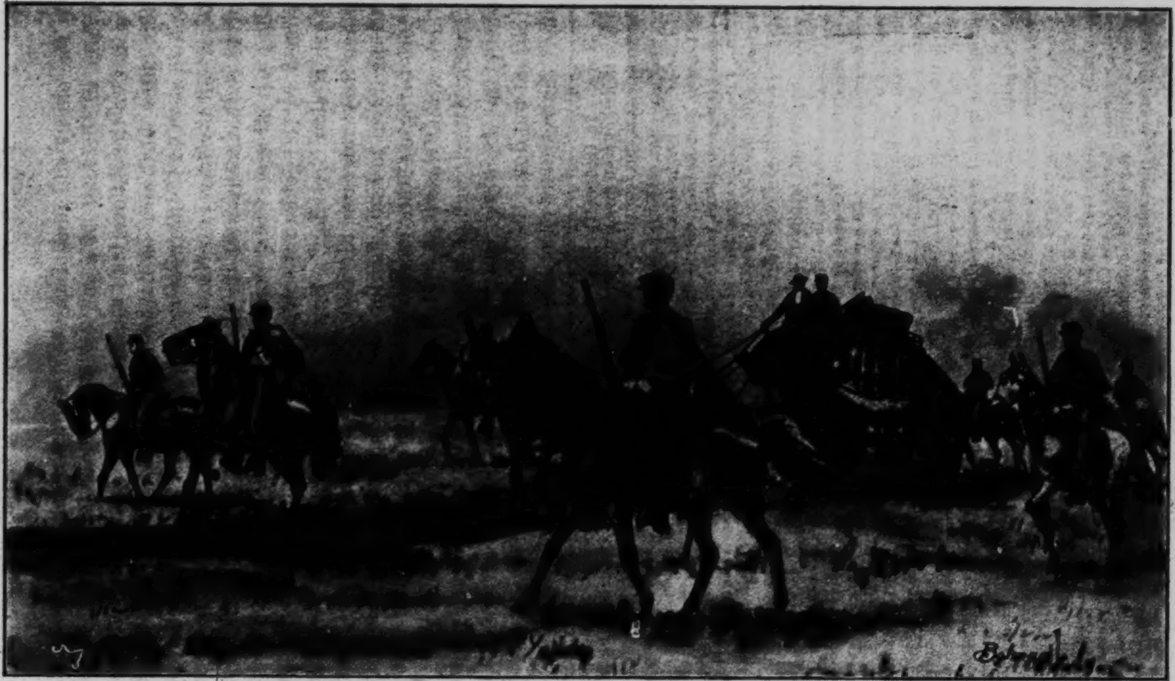
"The agitation of the question drew attention to this part of Nebraska, some people settling here and others purchasing lands. I remember one very enthusiastic gentleman. While visiting me he told me his faith in the removal of the capital was so strong that he had purchased two sections of land of the Union Pacific Railroad Company on the strength of it.

"And another good accomplished by the agitation of the question was, that by my showing up the bad condition of the streets, roads, parks, etc. in the city of Washington, its narrow streets and stagnant ponds, Governor Shepherd immediately went to work to renovate, remodel and reform the material aspect of the city. At great expense, the streets were widened, rows of trees planted, and the city made more beautiful and attractive in every respect, insomuch that the citizens charged him with wasteful extravagance. Public opinion was so strong against him, by reason of his wise expenditures, which in the eyes of some parsimonious citizens was such a great fault and the cause of so much ill will against him, that he had to leave the city under a cloud of displeasure. Many years afterwards—after the governor had won riches and honor in Mexico, where he had made his home—he revisited Washington; in acknowledgment of the good he had done that city by his improvements the citizens tendered him a banquet, and he was lionized by those who years before had denounced him.

"Of course my agitation of the capital removal question had to come to an end, which was most effectually done when the Fort Kearney reservation was thrown open to homestead settlement by act of Congress. When Senator Hitchcock introduced the bill for the final disposition of the reservation, he sent me a copy of it, with a laconic letter attached, which read: 'How do you like this?—P. W. Hitchcock, U. S. S.' He must have thought I would feel bad about the disposition of the land, but I was not that kind of material. Public sentiment was not up to a capital removal point. The land had to be used in some other way.

"Had the measure been a success, through the timely and favorable action of Congress, one of the largest cities in the United States would have arisen as if by magic. Railroads would have centered from all points of the compass; a large canal would have been cut on the south side of the Platte river, to furnish power and water for the city, the streets of which would have been supplied with running water, as it is in Salt Lake City; the best talent would have been put to work in creating public improvements which tend to modernize a first-class city, making it a credit to the nation, a center of business, thought and intelligence for a republican people; a city of pleasant homes; a city of which people from all parts of the republic might have been delighted with and proud of—the city of New Washington, in the heart of the republic."

(See note at bottom of page 262.)



"UNCLE SAM" GUARDS THE OVERLAND MAIL. *Page 242.*

The oldest and one of the best-known ranches on the South Platte, in the later '50's and early '60's, was **Beauvais**. It was located on the old overland route, a few rods from the river, about 428 miles northwest of Atchison. The place in early days was known as "Old California Crossing." It was thus named because nearly all the travel overland after the California gold discoveries of 1848 that went west on the south side of the Platte crossed the great stream at that point. During the immense travel occasioned by the gold excitement, however, the place was known as "Ash Hollow Crossing." Some of the Mormons also forded there when they emigrated to "Zion," in the early days. In fact, nearly all the travel to Utah, California and Oregon forded at this point, there being no other crossing known on the South Platte west of there at that time.

Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, when he took his army across the plains from Fort Leavenworth, in the summer and fall of 1857, to put down the Mormon rebellion, also forded at this crossing. Subsequently the late Gen. F. W. Lander crossed there on

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Note.—In Bancroft's History of Nevada, Colorado, and Wyoming, page 532, credit is given the man whom the historian supposed started the first newspaper on the frontier, as follows:

"In connection with the newspaper history of the country, L. R. Freeman should be mentioned. In 1865 he took the first printing-press that crossed the Missouri river above St. Louis to Fort Kearney, on the Platte. With the advance of the Pacific railroad he pursued his way westward, publishing his paper, *The Frontier Index*, at Kearney, North Platte, Julesburg, Laramie, Bear River, and Ogden. In 1885 he was at Yakima, in Washington, making his way to Puget sound. No other newspaper in the United States has so varied a history as *The Index*."

Mr. Sydenham explains this matter as follows:

"The above statement is all *false* from top to bottom, and from the beginning to the end. Here you have the positive facts—for I am personally knowing to everything. I was the first publisher of a newspaper west of the Missouri valley in Nebraska; anyway, west of Fremont, which is situated about forty miles west of the Missouri river. I am not certain whether there was a paper there then or not in 1862—the year I published my Kearney *Herald*, at old Fort Kearney. Mr. Leigh R. Freeman came to Fort Kearney about the year 1864 or 1865, just after the war was over; for he had been an operator within the Confederate lines, and he and his brother were Democrats of the strongest secessionist kind. I was the very opposite in politics. Freeman came to take charge of the telegraph office at Fort Kearney. He was not even a printer, and had no press or type whatever to cross the Missouri with. Before he came to Fort Kearney I had sold my press and printing outfit to Seth P. Mobley, of the Seventh Iowa Cavalry, who purchased it to do printing for the army and publish a paper besides. L. R. Freeman purchased the outfit of Mobley, and then started his paper *The Frontier Index*, which was published for a while at Fort Kearney and Kearney City (old Dobytown), and then started it along at the terminal stations of the Union Pacific railroad—for a time at Plum Creek, then at North Platte, and then at Julesburg, Laramie, etc., till he finally stopped at Butte, Mont. Until that time, while on the railroad, his paper was named *The Frontier Index on Wheels*. When he arrived at Butte, or some time after, I think he changed the name of his paper to *The Inter-Mountain*, or something like that."

his return from an expedition overland late in the fall of 1858, in charge of a Government party sent out to look up and locate a military wagon road from some point on the upper Missouri to Oregon. The ranch was also used as one of the early stations of the Jones-Russell Pike's Peak stage line in 1859, and, at this crossing, the John Hockaday mail and express coach, drawn by six mules, between Atchison and Salt Lake City, also forded, in the later '50's and early '60's. It was also a station for the pony express, and it finally became one of the most widely known ranches on the overland route.

The South Platte, at Beauvais, was just half a mile across from bank to bank. Fifteen miles north of this is Ash Hollow, where General Harney slaughtered the Brule Sioux Indians in 1855. It is a mile through that memorable hollow to the north fork of the Platte; thence the road ran up the south side of that stream, *via* Court-house Rock, Chimney Rock, Scott's Bluffs, and the mouth of Horse creek, to Fort Laramie.

The river was always fordable at Beauvais, but difficult to cross in the spring, from the annual rise caused by melting snow in the mountains. Usually there was not much trouble in fording except from quicksands. During August, September, and October, 1857, Hon. P. G. Lowe, of Leavenworth, a pioneer Kansan and a veteran frontier plainsman, was wagonmaster, and camped at Beauvais and escorted most of the troops and trains that went out with General Johnston on the Mormon expedition, in the fall of 1857. Mr. Lowe was familiar with every rod of the river in that vicinity, having frequently measured the fording places and safely piloted the train over.

Beauvais's name was known on the plains all the way from the Missouri river to the Pacific. He was a Frenchman, from St. Louis, who went on the frontier among the Indians at a very early day, and traded with them wherever the business proved profitable. He finally settled on the South Platte, after the breaking out of the Pike's Peak gold excitement, and put up his trading post at that crossing in 1859. This was ten years after the date of the California gold excitement. When he settled on the Platte he was about forty years of age; a large, fine-looking man; very reticent, even to moroseness. Though intelligent and pleasant with his friends, he was sullen when bored by emigrants. He was on the plains, as those who frequently met him could see, for business only. He took the leading St. Louis papers, and fully intended to close his life in the great metropolis, after accumulating a fortune on the plains. He succeeded in the latter, and returned to his old home after the completion of the railroad to the Pacific, which had ruined his trade of pioneer days along the Platte. He may have been a Mormon and a polygamist, for he appeared to be a muchly married man, and no less than three squaws and a large number of half-breed papooses running about the premises indicated that he had accepted the Mormon faith as to plurality of wives.

The immense travel to Denver and other points in Colorado, as well as the vast immigration that had set in for the great Northwest, was the opportunity for this pioneer trader of the South Platte to amass a considerable fortune. His building as originally put up was a square, hewn-log structure, but in the early '60's it had been considerably enlarged, to meet the increasing demands of his trade. In it was a large stock of buffalo robes, elk and antelope skins, furs, and such other goods as he could get by trading coffee, sugar, blankets, tobacco, beads, trinkets, etc., with the various tribes of Indians that roamed up and down the Platte and occupied the gulches and cañons some distance away from the river. His was one of the most prominent trading posts in the Platte valley, and in it he kept one of the best stocks to be found along the overland route. He was well equipped for trading with the Indians, as well as for supplying the needs of parties on the plains.

Nearly all the crossing of the overland emigration and freighting was done at Beauvais until Lieutenant Bryon, of the United States topographical engineers, was sent out and went up the Lodge Pole Creek route, in 1857; and but very little travel went the new route until 1861, when Government established the first daily overland mail on the central route, and it ran for a time over this road.

While crossing the South Platte near O'Fallon's Bluffs, some miles below this point, early in the summer of 1852—seven years before Beauvais established his trading post—John H. Clark (late a citizen of Clay county, Kansas, and postmaster at Fancy Creek),[*] in charge of a company of twenty men from Cincinnati, whom he was taking overland to California, wrote in his journal as follows: "There is perhaps more fun, more excitement, more whipping, more swearing and more whisky drank at this place than at any other point on the Platte river. Many head of cattle were being driven over when we crossed, and the dumb brutes seemed to have an inclination to go any way but the right one. Loose cattle, teams, horses, mules, oxen, men and boys all in a muss; the men swearing and whipping, the cattle bellowing, the horses neighing and the boys shouting made music for the multitude. It was an interesting scene."

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[*] Died at the age of 88 years in Clay county, Kansas, December 26, 1900.

Guittard's Station. South view.
Page 199.

EXCITING EXPERIENCE WITH A FRESH TEAM AT LATHAM. *Page 276.*

CHAPTER XII.

THE OVERLAND STAGE DRIVERS.

ON the eastern division of the overland line, which embraced that part of the route between Atchison and Denver — comprising about one-third of the distance across to the California terminus — there were, in the early '60's, at least fifty drivers regularly employed, and fully as many stock tenders. About the same number of drivers and stock tenders were also employed on each of the other two divisions, between Denver and Salt Lake and Salt Lake and Placerville, the western terminus. The drivers alone made quite an army on the great stage line. Besides those regularly employed, there were perhaps fifty others who would be waiting at different points, hoping to get an occasional job for a few runs, and, perhaps, get on as regular driver. Almost without exception they were a jolly set — the most genial, whole-souled fellows I ever knew. In disposition hardly any two were alike.

With few exceptions, the drivers were warm-hearted, kind, and obliging. Many of them were capable of filling other and more important positions. The most of them were sober, especially while on duty, but nearly all were so fond of an occasional "eye-opener" that it was unnecessary ever to give them a second invitation to "take a smile." Now and then one would be found who could speak two or three languages and quote Shakespeare and passages from the Scriptures.

There was a young man from Massachusetts, whose name I cannot now recall, with a college education and somewhat versed in law, who had left home for something more remunerative in the then "wild and woolly West." He drove on the South Platte between O'Fallon's Bluffs and old Julesburg, and that seemed to be the height of his ambition. He had become so fascinated with life on the plains and his new occupation of driving a spirited four-horse stage team that he would not let his parents know where he was or what he was doing. All the information they could get from him was quite ambiguous. He wrote that he had abandoned all other pursuits and had gone "on the stage."

Quite a number of the boys were experienced in their business, having driven in a dozen or more different states and territories. Several were holding the reins of four- and six-horse stage teams in the West long before a railroad had reached the "Father of Waters." Now and then there was one to be found whose locks and beard were silvered from having sat on the box and weathered the wintry blasts of a third of a century or more, driving on various lines between the Alleghanies and the Rockies. Most of them were first-class drivers, and among them were several experienced business men and some fine singers. Often, riding over the trail in the "stilly hour of night," while sitting by them, have I listened to their sweet songs. Quite a number could play different musical instruments. The violin was the favorite with the most of them. Some were quite expert in picking the banjo; some enjoyed the guitar; others blew the clarinet, flute, fife, or piccolo, and one good-natured chap could "rattle the bones" to perfection. One was a good tambourine player; one was lightning on "chin music"; while another declared he could "rip a five-octave jew's-harp all to pieces."

While a number of them were farmers and ranchmen, others had had some experience as mechanics and clerks, and a few had been employed in one way or another on some railroad. One had steered a boat on the "raging canawl"; another had been a pilot on a Western river steamboat. Some were natural geniuses—"Jacks of all trades." Apparently there was nothing that delighted a good many of them so much as, when on the box, driving a wild, dashing team over a rough and crooked mountain road on a down grade. The rougher the trail and more dangerous, the more skill it required to handle the team and the better it appeared to suit them. It used to be a common remark—a sort of byword many years ago—that it took a good driver to run against every stone in the road, but the "Overland" boys usually managed to get over the trail at a lively gait and knew just how to miss all of such obstructions. In turning short curves and going at a breakneck speed around a precipitous embankment on the very edge of a dangerous-looking ledge of rocks, with a yawning abyss into which you could look hundreds of feet below, a fearless, care-for-nothing driver appeared in the height of his glory. The most of them seemed to know no fear.

Every one of the boys was my friend. If I had an enemy among them I never knew it. A few of them, however, were indescribably tough characters, frequently "spilin' for a fight"; but in most of the difficulties and knock-down-and-drag-out engagements in which they occasionally participated it was found, on investigation, that they were most always on the defensive. On the frontier every driver, however, was armed. He nearly always went around with a revolver in a belt at his side, and some of them also carried in their belts or had safely secreted in their boot-legs big, ugly-looking knives. A number of them were well versed in the ways of the Indian and could speak, so as to be understood, the Sioux, Pawnee, Cheyenne, Arapahoe and Comanche tongues; besides, they were experts at many of the gambling devices then in use on the frontier. No "heathen Chinee" versed in "ways that are dark and tricks that are vain" could excel, even if he could equal, them in the science of dealing cards from the "bottom of the deck." Only an occasional one of the boys as I knew them seemed strictly moral and religiously inclined. It may be that some, perhaps all, of those who, in a limited way at least, professed Christianity and occasionally offered an earnest, fervent prayer from thirty to forty years ago have long since passed to the "great beyond."

Bob Hodge, who every other day drove forty-eight miles—from Atchison to Kennekuk and return—stood as straight as an Indian, and was a rather heavy-set man. In a number of respects he was a curiosity. Nearly every one in Atchison knew him. He had a copper bugle that he always carried, and which he had blown on the golden shores of the Pacific. He had also blown it the entire length of the overland line. He seemed to be very proud of his instrument and, no matter what the weather was, he took it along with him every trip. No living mortal ever appeared to enjoy anything in the way of a musical instrument more. He had blown it from the summits of the Sierra Nevadas, the Wasatch range, and the Rocky Mountains; along the parched alkali region of Nevada and in the Salt Lake valley. He blew it as he entered the Mormon capital, in the early '60's. He blew it over the plains, on the "Great American Desert," on his entry into Denver and Fort Kearney; along the Platte and Little Blue rivers and over the rolling prairies of Nebraska and Kansas. Nearly every time Bob came to Atchison on his return trip from his run to Kennekuk, as he reached Commercial street about Eighth, with his bugle in one hand and the four or six lines in the other, he would blow all the way down the street to the postoffice—then located in a one-story frame building on the south side of Commercial street, between Third and Fourth—a distance of nearly five squares.

One of Bob's favorite pieces—especially if the stage came along from the west in the night—was "Get Out of the Wilderness." This piece evidently was his favorite. While he appeared to be a great lover of music, in reality he knew no more about the various musical characters than a Hottentot does of the geology of Kansas. However, he was possessed of a pair of gutta-percha lungs, and he could, if an opportunity was given, "toot his horn" from morning till night, only stopping occasionally to irrigate his throat with Kentucky whisky. Apparently nothing gave him so much pleasure as blowing his bugle. He could, in his peculiar way, blow "Susannah" way up and down the hill and send "Yankee Doodle" over on the "Other Side of Jordan."

Before coming to Atchison, Bob used to drive in California; later out in Nevada and Utah and on a number of divisions east of there. He was jokingly spoken of as the "great blower" from the eastern to the western terminus of the long stage line. He held the reins of a spanking four-horse team of bays in and out of Atchison for a long time and seemed very proud of them. While employed on the east end, he had his harness decorated with scores of ivory rings and ornamented the finest of any driver on the line. He was dressed in a gorgeous buckskin suit, wore high boots with pants' legs inside, and was a rather gay-looking fellow. Socially, Hodge was a good man, had any amount of friends, and was one of the best drivers on the line. His great failing, however, was his uncontrollable appetite for liquor. Under his cushion he always carried a private bottle when on the box. While he was most always "full," and apparently could hold the contents of a limited Kansas saloon, he seldom was seen beastly drunk. Very few ever saw him on the "Overland" without being fortified with a drink or two of "cold pizen." He finally left the stage line and went away—no one, so far as I could learn, ever knew where.

Many of the boys employed on the great line were continually moving east to west and west to east, during the period the daily stage was in operation. They might be driving one month on a division between Atchison and Denver and in three months afterward would perhaps be employed between Salt Lake and Placerville. Many preferred to drive on the west end when greenbacks were at such a tremendous discount. They were paid in gold at the western terminus of the line, and, besides, desired to get a taste of California fruit and become acquainted with the climate.

Naturally some of the drivers were restless and apparently never contented. They wanted to be continually on the move, and it seemed they were never happy until they could get transferred to some other division on the line. They had relatives or particular friends driving at other points and they wanted to be with them. It was just the same with many employed a thousand miles or more west of the Missouri river, for they were seemingly as anxious to come east and drive among old friends and acquaintances, where living was better, and where they could enjoy more of the comforts and luxuries of life.

Nearly every driver I knew seemed more or less fascinated with his chosen occupation, sitting on a stage box, and when once in the business it appeared as if they never could retire from it. There evidently was some sort of a charm about stage-driving that they never could resist. Old drivers frequently told me that. Some were good for nothing else. Once in it, they appeared to be there for the better part of their lives. A driver would cover from two to three "stages" (25 to 35 miles), but occasionally one would go four or five "stages" (from 50 to 60 miles).

Remarkable as it may appear, some of the drivers were such experts in handling their favorite whip that they could sit on the box and cut a fly off the back of either of the lead horses or mules with the lash, while going at a lively trot. Nearly every driver fairly worshiped his whip, and considered it worth almost its weight in gold. Some had the stocks ornamented with silver ferrules. A driver almost held his whip sacred, and hated to loan it even to his most intimate friend and companion driver.

Nearly all of the "Overland" drivers were finally knocked out by the iron horse after the completion of the Pacific railroad, in 1869, which, for many hundreds of miles, traversed almost the identical route which, for about eight years previous, had been taken almost daily by the old Concord stage-coaches. Their occupation having gone, most of the boys finally went on ranches in Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Wyoming, and other states and territories in the great West, and many of them are now married and in easy circumstances, and, since they are well advanced in years, have no desire to engage again in staging.

Among the army of drivers employed on the stage line at various periods between Atchison and Placerville, in the '60's, many of whom I became personally acquainted with, were:

Ackley, Burt.
Adams, Joseph H.
Allen, Oscar.
Anderson, John.
Babcock, George.
Baker, Frank.
Baker, Joe.
Baker, William.
Baxter, L. P.
Benham, Alex.
Berry, Joseph.
Betts, John.
Bilderback, Gabe.
Billingsley, James.
Bowen, Tim.
Bowers, Gus.
Brainard, Joe.
Braden, John.
Brink, J. W.
Brown, Hank.
Bruce, Ed.
Burke, John M.
Burke, Thomas.
Burnett, John.
Campbell, Jack.
Carlton, George.
Carrigan, Billy.
Carr, R. P.
Carson, Frank.
Cheevers, Tom.
Cochran, William A.
Cody, William F.
Collier, Shade.
Collins, John.
Corbett, Billy.
Craig, D.
Cummings, Enoch.
Curtis, Bob.
Douglas, James.
Downard, Ed.
Downie, M. M.
"Dutch Henry."
Emery, Charles N.
Emery, Corl.
Emery, Robert.
Enos, Jim.
Eubanks, Joe.
Evans, William.
Forsha, John T.
Foster, John.
Fox, Balaam.
Fraser, Frank.
French, George.
Frost, Robert.
Fuller, L.
Getz, Sam. V.
Gilbert, John.
Gilmer, John T.
Goodwin, Mark.
Graves, James H.
Grayson, Ray.
Greenup, Bill.
Hall, Bob.
Hammey, Peter.
Hawk, Jake.
Hawley, Russ.
Haymaker, Ed.
Haynes, Charles C.
Haynes, Chris.
Hazard, John E.
Head, Willard.
Hickok, James B.
Hill, Lew. M.
Hodge, Bob.
Holbrook, Ed.
Holliday, Al.
Hood, Rufus.
Hopkins, Frank.
Huff, Alonzo.
Hulbert, Geo.
Ivans, Charles.
Jerome, Eli.
John, David.
Keane, "Gassy."
Keller, Thomas.
Kelly, William.
Kennedy, Edward.
Kilburn, E. B.
Kilburn, Ed.
Kinkaid, R. O.
Lowe, H. B.
Lucas, Hank.
Manville, Charles.
Martin, Bob.
Massey, Dave.
McCutcheon, Dave.
McDonald, James.
McKee, D. H.
McMannys, Pete.
McNeil, Arch.
Meinhart, E. M.
Mitchell, Tom.
Moody, David.
Moore, Webb.
Mosier, William.
Mott, Ira.
Motter, Milt.
Murray, Jonas.
Neiderhouse, ——.
Nichols, E. P.
Nolly, Paul.
Oakley, Thomas.
Oldham, Billy.
Orr, Matt.
Parks, Chas.
Parks, Jim.
Pollenger, E. M.
Poole, Jabe.
Puffenberger, John.
Quinn, Jim.
Ranahan, Tommy.
Rice, Dan.
Riddle, Dick.
Robinson, Edward.
Roswell, Caleb R.
Russell, "Pap."
Ryan, Tommy.
Sewell, Robert.
Shoemaker, Al.
Shorey, S. F.
Shorey, Ezra.
Smart, Sam.
Smith, Con.
Smith, Dan.
Smith, Elias.
Smith, Peter.
Smith, William.
Snell, Ed.
Spencer, Samuel.
Steed, Ben.
Sterling, Ed.
Stewart, Jim.
Stewart, Tom.
Swan, Nate.
Taylor, George.
Thomas, Reub. S.
Towne, George.
Townsend, Perry.
Trotter, William.
Trout, Dan.
Van Horn, Frank.
Voorhees, Lew.
Updike, Billy.

Walker, Lew.
Warner, John.
Warren, John.
Warson, Perley.
Washburn, Johnny.
Webb, Green.
Welch, Mike.
Welch, F. T.
Wellman, Billy.
West, Rodney P.
Wheeler, George G.
Wilder, George.
Willard, Fred.
Williamson, Abner.
Wilson, Charles.
Wilson, Henry.
Wright, "Pap."
Wright, Richard.

In the foregoing list one Brown appears, but no Jones. No less than five answered to the name of Smith ; but, singular as it may appear, John Smith was conspicuous for his absence.

There were a number of other drivers employed from time to time whose names cannot now be recalled. Quite a number went by some nickname. A fellow I simply knew as "Hank" drove on the Salt Lake division for some time. Another driver on the Platte was known as "Whisky Jack." As might naturally be inferred from the name, he had little use for water except for his infrequent ablutions. But he had achieved a reputation in another way ; the fellow could get away with more double-rectified, copper-distilled, trigger-lightning sod-corn juice than any other man who sat on the box of a four- or six-horse stage-coach. Notwithstanding his prodigious appetite for whisky, he was a kind, good-natured fellow, had a big, warm heart, and he was seldom seen in such a condition that he could not properly attend to his duties as a driver.

One of the boys from Benicia, on the Pacific coast, was known as "Heenan," and, as far as could be learned, few ever knew him by any other name. Another driver was simply known as "Brigham," because he had spent a good deal of his time at Salt Lake, and claimed to have known the great Mormon prophet. Another —one of the happiest on the line—went by the name of "Happy Jack," and still another as "Smiling Tom." One on the road northwest of Denver was known as "Rowdy Pete," another as "Puffey," and another—a warm-hearted fellow who drove west of Fort Kearney—as "Waupsie." There was one, well along in years, who was known as "Pap" Wright; called "Pap," he said, because he was "always Wright." One chap out on the Salt Lake division, whose name I am unable to recall, but who frequently passed over the stage line, was known as the "tough cuss from Bitter creek." There was one who went by the name of "Rattlesnake Pete"; one was known as "One-eyed Tom"; one as "Cross-eyed John"; another as "Red Horse"; and still another —James H. Graves, of Centralia, Kan.—who used to saw catgut at dances along the Platte, was better known as "Fiddler Jim." Lon Huff went by the name of "Arkansaw." Another was simply known as "Fish Creek Bill"; and Charley Lewis, until in the early '90's residing near Topeka, Kan.—a lean, lank fellow who stood over six feet three in his stockings, and who drove on the cut-off between Denver and Bijou creek in the later '60's—was known as "Long Slim." It was always a pleasure to me to sit on the box alongside the drivers and listen to them, as I frequently did, at all hours of the day and night, while they sang songs, told stories, and related their experiences before and since they began performing "on the stage."

I was considerably amused in the fall of 1863 when a temperance lecturer made a trip by stage across the plains. At every opportunity he would talk a few minutes to the drivers and other employees of the line, who were drinking and passing their private bottle. He tried to show up, in its worst light, the dangers of using liquor as a beverage. He spent some time in a quiet way talking with a red-nosed driver, arguing the subject from various standpoints, and using all the powers he possessed trying to induce him and all the boys to abstain from using the vile stuff. The red-nosed fellow did not drink a drop of liquor, but on account of his florid complexion a stranger, at first sight, would invariably pronounce him an inveterate old toper.

As innocent as a lamb, the driver listened attentively to every word the great reformer uttered. Then, seeing an opportunity to have a little fun at the expense of the lecturer, he said: "I admit, my good friend, that water is a great thing in its place. For washing clothes and dishes there is nothing to equal it. For bathing, I know of nothing better. For running steamboats and putting out fires, nothing, so far, has ever been found to take its place. But, for a steady drink, there is in my opinion nothing to equal the good, old Kentucky Bourbon whisky."

There was a good deal of promiscuous drinking by a few of the drivers and other employees, and some of the boys who never drank now and then felt for the safety of their lives. Occasionally I felt for my own safety while on the box with a drunken driver, but I was careful never to even let one know I had the least fear. After the stage line had been in operation for a few years, it became necessary to promulgate a new order. It was afterward understood that any employee working for Ben. Holladay, proprietor of the overland stage line, "who shall become intoxicated, and thereby neglect the business for which he is employed, or shall maltreat any of the other employees or any person on the line of the road, shall, for every such offense, forfeit one month's wages, which will positively be deducted on proof of the same. Wages to be settled by the paymaster only, at such times as the regular quarterly payments of the line are made."

This stringent order for a while had the desired effect, many of the employees being careful not to imbibe too freely. They took their "fire-water" after that in more moderate doses until the excitement finally died away. Of all the drinking done by the boys before and since the order, I never heard of one of them having as much as a nickel deducted from his wages. It would have been a risky undertaking for any man in the employ of Holladay to report any such shortcoming as a drunken driver neglecting his duty while in the service of the stage company.

Frequently I saw drivers while sitting on the box and riding with them when they were so drunk that the wonder to me was how they ever kept from tumbling off the seat. Many times I have been anxious for them, thinking every minute they certainly would fall to the ground dead, and that it would devolve on me to drive with the corpse to the next station. But of all the drunkenness I saw on the stage line, I never yet saw a driver so "full" that he could not, while on the box, hold the reins and his whip and go around a curve or turn a short corner as handsomely as any one who never imbibed a drop. While none of them was ever docked on his wages, as a last resort it finally became necessary to quietly make out a "black list" of the most objectionable fellows, who, after that time, it was understood by the division agents, were under no circumstances ever to be again employed.

Occasionally a wild Mexican broncho team would be harnessed up and hitched to the stage-coach for the first time; then for a little while there would be a feast of genuine amusement for all hands. No one appeared to enjoy the sport better than the driver handling the lines. He would be in the height of his glory. For a few minutes the show would be a sort of "Wild West," equal to if not better than an ordinary circus. Each team would have to be held by the bit until all the passengers had taken their seats inside the coach and the driver his place on the box; this done, the performance would almost instantly begin. Usually the animals would at once go off jumping and plunging on a lively run, while the driver would keep on throwing the lash among them. After running a mile or two at pretty fair railroad speed, the animals would finally get cooled down; then, for the balance of the trip, they would go along at the accustomed gait of a stage team.

Now and then the wild, unbroken steeds would cut up some extremely ludicrous antics. I never saw so much sport in so short a time as I once did in the spring of 1864 at Latham station, on the South Platte. A team of six wild bronchos were for the first time hitched up, late one afternoon, to the east-bound California stage destined for Atchison. When the passengers were seated and the driver said "Let go," the off leader immediately jumped over the near one, while the near wheeler jumped over the off one, and soon every animal was down. All were plunging and kicking and I never before saw such a mixed-up and tangled lot of stage animals. Every mustang was down and not one of them could get up. To me it appeared that the mixed-up steeds could not be untangled and get out alive. For several minutes it required the services of a half-dozen drivers and several stock tenders, the stage and mail agents and some others at the station to get their harness righted, and everything again in proper shape to make another start.

But the drivers, as much as any one else, invariably enjoyed the highly exciting sport. They thought it a genuine stage picnic. In such a mix up they were always equal to any emergency; but to a number of anxious, timid passengers inside the coach the situation was not quite so interesting. Where such wild, spirited teams were used, the roads were usually level as a floor, and there was little if any danger of an accident from a runaway.

The ranks of the old drivers and messengers and agents—in fact, all the employees of the noted stage line—are steadily being thinned out. Truthfully it may be said of a great many of them that "their frames are bent, their locks silvery white, and their eyes dim." Only about one-half of the vast army employed on the "Overland" in the '60's are now believed to be living. One by one the boys are dropping from the roll. None of them can last much longer. In the language of the pioneer paper of Denver, "it will only be a few years until the last one will have taken his departure over the long trail from which no traveler has ever returned."

Buffalo Bill was not only one of the best pony express riders, but he was an overland stage driver, and a good one. He drove between Fort Kearney and Plum Creek, in 1865, a handsome gray team, (page 101,) a decided favorite among all the stage boys in that vicinity. He participated, some distance west of Kearney, during the old staging days, in one of the liveliest fights that ever took place with the Indians on the great overland line. The story of the fight, in which he took a prominent part, is told by John M. Burke, the veteran driver, as follows:

"The condition of the country along the North Platte had become so dangerous that it was almost impossible for the Overland Stage Company to find drivers, although the highest wages were offered. Billy at once decided to turn stage-driver, and his services were gladly accepted. While driving a stage between Split Rock and Three Crossings he was set upon by a band of several hundred Sioux. Lieutenant Flowers, assistant division agent, sat on the box beside Billy, and there were half a dozen well-armed passengers inside. Billy gave the horses the reins. Lieutenant Flowers applied the whip, and the passengers defended the stage in a running fight. Arrows fell around and struck the stage like hail, wounding the horses and dealing destruction generally, for two of the passengers were killed and Lieutenant Flowers badly wounded. Billy seized the whip from the wounded officer, applied it savagely, shouted defiance, and drove on to Three Crossings, thus saving the stage."

One of the old-time stage-drivers is H. B. **Lowe**, of Caldwell, Kan., who was a familiar figure on the box forty years ago. In his time he has held the lines on "twos" and "fours" all over Kansas, and way "out west" as far as Utah. He was a driver in early days on the old Santa Fé stage-coach along the Arkansas river westward from Fort Dodge, which a third of a century ago was an important station on the trail leading into the great Southwest. He once drove for the Kansas Stage Company between Leavenworth and Lawrence, when these two towns were the biggest cities in Kansas. In the later '50's he drove on the Hockaday mail and express coach between Atchison and Salt Lake City, and hauled into the "City of the Saints" Horace Greeley, who was a passenger with him on his run when the philosopher made his overland journey by stage to California, in the summer of 1859. While driving on the Salt Lake and Santa Fé routes he hauled many prominent army men and high officials across the plains. Mr. Lowe claims to have hauled Hon. John Speer, the pioneer and veteran Kansas journalist, at least fifty times. He also saw the Indians whom General Harney drove into the Platte river, and relates that, when the mercury registered twenty degrees below zero, he came to a bunch of buffalo that lay in the sandy trail for warmth, when he was obliged to crack his whip and yell "Hoa! hoa!" to get the shaggy beasts out of the road.

Ed. Sterling, better known as "Sandy," formerly a 'bus driver in New York city, began as a driver on the overland line in 1860, from Seneca to Cottonwood station, and continued until the spring of 1861. He was then transferred to the South Platte fork at old Julesburg, from which place he drove west to Valley Station until fall; then he went on the Salt Lake division and drove from Weber to the foot of Big Mountain, a distance of thirty-five miles. Some time afterwards the high water washed out the road, and it was fully three days before anything could be heard from any place on the line east or west. The road became impassable and had to be changed. It afterwards ran through Weber valley to Dixie Cañon and to Parley's Park; thence to William Kimball's, son of the noted Mormon apostle, Heber C. Kimball. This road was afterwards used permanently as the great overland stage road and to accommodate the enormous freighting which was then going on over the plains and mountains. "Sandy" was reported to have had some narrow escapes in East and Dixie cañons, and more than once barely got away alive. In 1863, he, with another driver, Charley Haynes, was obliged to "double" the road from Plum Creek to Cottonwood Springs, a distance of sixty-two miles, for eight days and nights, on account of the horrible condition of the roads, which delayed the stages from both east and west.

After the closing of staging on account of the building of the Pacific railroad, Mr. Sterling located at Seneca, Kan., where he had driven for a long time, and engaged in the livery business in the early '70's, opening the "Overland Stable," which he ran for about twenty-five years. He was a man with many friends and greatly respected by the community. During his later years he was sick more or less from being exposed so much when in the employ of the stage company, and, after being confined to his bed for a few weeks, was forced to succumb. He died at his Kansas home in Seneca May 20, 1895.

CHARLES N. EMERY.

Charles N. Emery, born "way down in Maine" in 1835, was, a little over a third of a century ago, well known on the overland line. He kept Thirty-two-mile Creek station, on the eastern or Fort Kearney division, from March, 1862, until the spring of 1864. He was then given the station at Liberty Farm, twenty-five miles east of there, on the north bank of the Little Blue river. During the raid by the Indians in August, 1864, Thirty-two-mile Creek and Liberty Farm stations were burned, as were also a large number of other stations on the great stage line. In the spring of 1865, after new stations were built, following the terrible raid by Indians in 1864, Emery was placed in charge of the station at Fort Kearney, where he remained until the eastern division of the line was abandoned by the stage proprietor, after the completion of the Union Pacific from Omaha to Kearney. Mr. Emery was a very useful man for the stage line. He was a good judge of horses, and, when occasion required, he could mount the box and hold the reins of a four- or six-horse stage team quite as well as most of the boys.

While in the employ of the stage line, Charley Emery had the reputation of keeping a most excellent eating station. Mrs. Emery was a first-class cook and everything on her table was gotten up in nice shape for the passengers. An incident is related of one of Ben. Holladay's trips by stage from California east, when he stopped one morning at Thirty-two-mile Creek and breakfasted at the Emery table. Ben. was considerable of a frontiersman. He had been raised among the jungles of the

"Big Muddy," in western Missouri, and was apparently more fond of a slice of good fried bacon and a "corn dodger" than anything that could be gotten up in the eating line. Mrs. Emery somehow knew this, and, in her best style, prepared an ample supply of these two substantial "frontier delicacies." After the great stage man had partaken of such a nicely gotten up breakfast, before departing on his journey east, he threw down on the table a twenty-dollar gold piece, which he said was for the "lady of the house," who had anticipated his coming and had cooked for him such a choice breakfast.

Mr. Emery died at his home in Beatrice, Neb., in 1898. For the past quarter of a century or more he had been a citizen of Beatrice, and was there known as one of the early residents of that beautiful city so charmingly situated on the east side of the Big Blue river. He had an interesting family—he married at Lawrence, Kan., in the later '50's—and two sons whom I knew at Thirty-two-mile Creek in the early '60's as little tots are now between thirty and forty years old, and both are married and are the heads of families of their own.

Enoch Cummings, now in the prime of life, is one of the oldest and best known of all the drivers on the old overland stage line. He was born in Virginia, April 7, 1839, and first drove stage in Ohio in 1853, and two years afterward in West Virginia. He next drove in Illinois and Iowa, and later out of Tipton, Mo., west on the old Butterfield route, the first overland mail to the Pacific, that was started from St. Louis in September, 1858. Still later he drove in Kansas, Nebraska, and Colorado. He spent the greater part of sixteen years on the stage box. His first driving in Kansas was along the Kaw river, in the later '50's, from St. Mary's to Black Jack station, twenty-five miles, on the Leavenworth and Fort Riley route, in the service of the Kansas Stage Company. He also drove out of Fort Riley and Junction City, in the Kaw valley, and out of Leavenworth and other points, in the early days of Kansas staging.

Cummings, early in 1861, drove on the Salt Lake mail route which ran out of Atchison once a week, from Liberty Farm to Fort Kearney, fifty-five miles. He drove one trip a week up and back. There were three strings of stock on the line, to make it a triweekly to Denver. The Salt Lake stages then crossed the South

Platte at old Julesburg; thence to the Mormon capital the coaches ran weekly. He relates that on one trip during 1860, when a little east of Lone Tree, soon after the break of day, his attention was attracted by a big cloud of dust a short distance ahead of him. The next thing he saw was a monster buffalo running abreast the stage trail. This was almost immediately followed by a band of Indians mounted on their ponies in hot pursuit. Cummings was then a "tenderfoot" on the plains—never before having encountered wild buffalo and Indians—and, for a few seconds, thought he would have to make peace with his Maker. The stage halted a short time to let Indians and buffalo go by and over the bluffs above Roper's ranch. As soon as they had passed he says it gave him great relief. But he finally got used to life on the plains, after punching his way through buffalo and Indians and roughing it for a period of a dozen or more years, in the '60's and '70's. When the central overland route was opened to the Pacific, on the 1st of July, 1861, Mr. Cummings was one of the boys who drove on the first daily stage-coach that ever crossed the country to Placerville, Cal., being employed at the time out on the prairies between Thirty-two-mile Creek and Fort Kearney. The old military post was on the south bank of the Platte, seven or eight miles east of the city of Kearney. Mr. Cummings also held the reins on the first daily Concord coach that came through from Placerville. He has at intervals driven over the entire line between Atchison and old Julesburg (453 miles), being steadily employed on that portion of the road during all the time while the line ran the Platte route.

ENOCH CUMMINGS.
Photo. 1865.

In 1864 he was promoted to division agent between Atchison and Big Sandy—distance, 140 miles—and subsequently he was employed in the same capacity between Nebraska City and Fort Kearney. In August, 1866, he moved the stock from the Nebraska

City and Fort Kearney road southwest to Manhattan, Kan , in the Kaw valley, at the mouth of the Blue river. He was afterwards employed to move all the coaches, stock, wagons, etc., belonging to the company between Rock Creek and Atchison southwest over the Smoky Hill route. After the Union Pacific road had been completed from Omaha west to the mountains and the stage line that started from Atchison had been abandoned, the Concords ran to Denver for the first time on the Smoky Hill route, until the Kansas Pacific railway was finished to Denver, September 1, 1870.

While on the Smoky Hill route Mr. Cummings was employed as division agent between Big Creek and Pond Creek, a distance of 139 miles. In 1866–'67 he finally determined to bid farewell to staging, although getting at the time $200 a month. Sixteen years of almost continuous service, during which time he rode on the box a distance approximating something over 100,000 miles, had satisfied him. He has had a rather eventful life as stage-driver, division agent, cowboy, a rider of the bronco, and a thrower of the lasso, and from saddle and camp life on the plains.

After he quit staging, Mr. Cummings married, in the fall of 1863, an estimable young lady, then living on the overland route at Guittard's Station, Kan. The fruits of this union have been ten children—five sons and five daughters. Three sons and three daughters are still living, the eldest daughter married, and Mr. Cummings, a young man in the early overland staging days, is now a happy grandfather. Mrs. Cummings takes a deep interest, with her husband, in everything pertaining to the old stage line, having made a wide acquaintance in the early days, and is therefore able to relate many interesting incidents that transpired along the line in Kansas and Nebraska.

Mr. Cummings has quite a number of relics of overland staging days which he has preserved, and now cherishes as priceless souvenirs. Among them is a breech-loading rifle of the Ballard pattern, an indispensable weapon on the plains in the '60's, a double-barreled shot-gun, and a revolver. He has them all carefully stored away, and calls the place "Fort Cummings," because all of his guns went through an exciting Indian fight on the Smoky Hill in the later '60's. He has also a set of double harness made at Concord, N. H., that was used on the old Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express line, opened across the plains to

Denver in May, 1859; also the whip-lash that he used all the time he drove on the "Overland" in the '60's. He could not now be induced to part with these relics for love or money.

Having bid adieu to staging, Mr. Cummings settled down in 1868 on a tract of land in Clay county, Kansas, about four miles west of Clay Center. He is now working 320 acres of as fine soil as any in Kansas. He is a pioneer, and one of the prominent citizens of his county, having served with credit two terms as sheriff. His long connection with the overland stage line has naturally made him a great lover of horses. He keeps twenty-five or thirty head, and although none of them ever did service on the old historic route between the "Big Muddy" and the Pacific, yet a number of them are very choice animals, and will compare favorably with much of the stock that was so long in daily service on the great stage line.

JOHN BRADEN was an old-time driver. As far as can be learned, he left his home in Pennsylvania or Ohio when quite young, and in the later '50's was employed by the Northeastern Stage Company, driving in Minnesota and Iowa. I first knew him on the Platte as a driver on the overland stage line for Ben. Holladay, between Diamond Springs and Alkali Lake, when I was also employed as messenger in 1863. For a time he drove on the eastern division, between Liberty Farm and Fort Kearney. He also drove out of Leavenworth for the Kansas Stage Company, and in the later '60's he drove on the Smoky Hill route for Wells, Fargo & Co. Braden was a good man and very useful.

It is said that, after leaving the Smoky Hill, he went west, and for some time drove on the Bitter Creek division of the overland line, between Fort Bridger and Salt Lake City. After Holladay sold the stage route to Wells, Fargo & Co., after the completion of the Union Pacific railway into the mountains, Braden worked for the noted express company a few years; then drifted southwest as far as Albuquerque, N. M., where, for about fifteen years, he was employed in livery stables, being a fine judge of stock and a very capable and efficient man. While in the prime of life, he met with a sudden and horrible death at Albuquerque at a carnival parade, on the night of October 17, 1896, during an explosion of a wagon-load of fireworks, in which accident he was burned almost to a crisp. He was in the wagon of fireworks driving a spirited team, which ran away upon being shot by rockets during the parade. The horses were only stopped when the vehicle collided with a hack containing four little girls. During all this time, while being roasted alive, Braden remained at his post; but, when the crisis came, fell to the ground exhausted, though he remained conscious. His last words before he closed his eyes and expired were: "Did I save the little girls and the queen of the carnival and her attendants?"

The funeral was one of the largest and most imposing that ever took place in Albuquerque. It was held at the opera-house, which was jammed, hundreds being unable to gain admittance. The funeral cortege to Fairview cemetery was nearly three miles long, the police, the marshal and staff, first regiment band and company, fire department, school children, in hacks and on foot, and all the civic organizations in the city being in the procession. Every minister in Albuquerque participated in the services, and every school—public and private, Protestant and Catholic—closed doors and allowed the children to attend. To show in what esteem the old driver was held for the heroic work he did in saving the several little girls from burning to death, in which act he lost his life, a beautiful monument, furnished by the citizens of Albuquerque, has been erected to his memory in the city park.

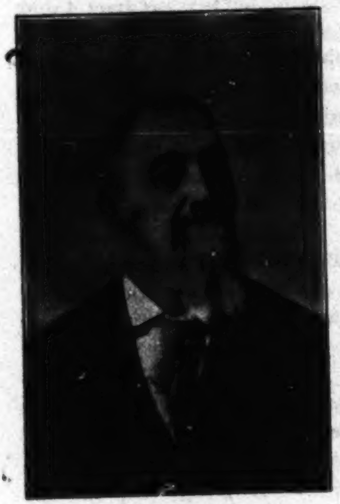
Bob Martin, a pony express rider from Big Sandy to Liberty Farm, and also to Fort Kearney, was, later, a driver on the overland line. He left the stage route in the early '60's and went to Montana, where he afterwards was known as "Frank Williams." Why he changed his name was not understood at the time, but subsequent events made everything plain. On a Montana stage-coach, the passengers bound for the States one morning were James Brown, L. F. Carpenter, David Dinan, W. L. Mers, A. J. McCausland, A. S. Parker, and Charles Parks. On reaching Port Neuf cañon, the driver, Frank Williams, drove into an ambush, according to a well-planned scheme, and at an agreed signal yelled out, "Here they are, boys." Secreted in the brush were seven robbers, and it was afterwards learned that one of the passengers (?) sitting on the box beside the driver, Williams, belonged to the murderous gang.

A fire was almost instantly opened up by the passengers on what they supposed were the robbers secreted in the brush. The shooting was promptly returned by the robbers, and five of the passengers, Dinan, McCausland, Mers, Parks, and Parker, fell dead the first fire. Carpenter also fell, wounded in three places, and, feigning death when approached by a robber who intended to shoot him a second time, thus luckily escaped. Brown fortunately escaped the flying bullets and, uninjured, made his way hurriedly into the brush. Of the men killed I was well acquainted with three, Parks, Parker, and McCausland. The two latter were my warm personal friends, pioneer citizens of Kansas, bound for their homes in Atchison, having between them, it is stated, some $16,000 in gold dust, which at that time was equivalent to near $50,000 in greenbacks.

All together, the amount of dust secured by the robbers was between $60,000 and $70,000—Frank Williams, for his treachery, doubtless being rewarded by an equal division of the vast sum. Of the eight robbers and murderers, Williams, the driver, was the only one arrested and punished for the horrible crime. Officers, in due time, were put on his trail. They followed him to Salt Lake. Learning they were closely in pursuit, he went to Denver, where he was afterwards captured. Result—he was convicted by a vigilance committee and, at an early hour one morning, hung from the limb of a tree on the bank of Cherry creek.

William Trotter, of Boulder, Mont., in the later '60's was known from the east to the west end of the overland line, and was perhaps better known than any other driver employed. He was born in Cannonsburg, Pa., November 20, 1836. He was the eldest of a family of six sons, and began life on his own account at the age of sixteen years. The family moved first to Ohio, thence to Iowa, and the subject of this sketch came to Kansas when it was yet a territory, during the later '50's. After two years' residence west of the Missouri river he returned to Iowa, and for a time was in the employ of the Western Stage Company, whose main line extended across the state from the Mississippi to the Missouri. Later he was employed by the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company, and, still later, on the same route by the overland stage line. At intervals he has driven in different sections almost the entire length of the noted historic route. For his long, faithful and efficient services he was promoted to the responsible position of division agent, on the line from old Julesburg to Fort Kearney.

In the rapid construction of the Pacific railroad, and while the overland staging was naturally being shortened on the main line, Mr. Trotter kept moving west, until finally, in the early '70's, he drifted to the Pacific coast. In California he conducted several hotels, spending one winter at Bakersfield, Kern county, since which time he has become quite noted as a landlord in the great Northwest, having, during the staging days, entertained many high officials, civil and military; among the latter, Generals Sheridan and Custer. He kept hotel for some time at Boise City, Idaho; afterward removed to Walla Walla and was proprietor of the Mechem station, on the summit of the Blue Mountains. From the latter place he removed to Boulder, Mont., and was landlord of the Windsor House at that place when it was only a stage station, the "city" at that time containing but one house.



WILLIAM TROTTER.

During the palmy staging days in the '60's he was simply known as Bill Trotter; but since he quit staging and has become a veteran Western hotel keeper he has been known as "Colonel" Trotter. Nearly his entire life has been spent in the great West, where he has witnessed changes that few can comprehend. For twenty years he was a stage-driver, and he estimates that he has driven a distance of at least 250,000 miles, or far enough to make ten trips around the world.

There are few stage men on the noted overland line that I have ridden with more than with my old-time friend Bill Trotter. In 1863-'65 I rode with him up and down the Platte valley hundreds of miles, in all kinds of weather—in balmy, clear, cloudy and stormy days; in the silvery moonlight, and on nights as dark as Egyptian darkness. I have sat by his side on the box through rain and shine, and have on several occasions faced with him severe thunder-storms and piercing northwest blizzards. We have climbed several mountain peaks together and prospected side by side in the Rockies. A more warm-hearted, jovial, good-natured fellow never handled the reins of a stage team. The last time I saw the veteran driver was in the winter and spring of 1865, shortly following a disastrous raid by Indians on the Platte. We sat on the box together for over two weeks on that memorable trip, traveling by day and bunking together as companions at night all the way from Cottonwood Springs to Denver, a distance of 300 miles, riding all the way behind a single team of four. Later, while division agent on the Platte, between old Julesburg and Fort Kearney, after the stage line was turned over to Wells, Fargo & Co., Trotter witnessed the burning of the stations at O'Fallon's Bluffs and Willow Island by the Indians, and was within twelve hours of the burning of Butts and Alkali stations. In these raids a vast amount of property was destroyed and a great deal of stage stock stolen.

E. P. Nichols was one of the jolliest drivers to be found on the overland line. He came out from Alleghany county, New York, to Kansas in the spring of 1857, nearly four years before the territory was admitted into the union as the central state. His early stage-driving in Kansas was up the Kaw valley west from Topeka in the later '50's, and later he drove from other points in Kansas on lines then operated by the Kansas Stage Company. He was afterwards a driver on the famous Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express route, started in the spring of 1859, and subsequently, when the line was opened for a daily through to the Pacific, as the "Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express," he was one of the first drivers employed.

While engaged with the latter company he was known from the Missouri river to the Pacific as "Teddy" Nichols. He drove on a goodly portion of the "Overland" between Atchison and Salt Lake in the early '60's and for some months in 1864, was a division agent on the line from Latham west. He was a warm-hearted, whole-souled, fellow, witty, and universally esteemed by nearly every employee on the line, his name being familiar to all "Overland" boys employed between Atchison and Placerville.

Few drivers on the "Overland" were possessed of so remarkable a memory as Teddy Nichols. He could relate many events connected with staging that scores of other drivers had long since forgotten. After the first railroad to the Pacific was completed, Mr. Nichols went west to the coast, where he was for several years engaged in staging, finally drifting back east as far as Arizona, where he was for some years again employed; but he then held the more responsible and lucrative position of superintendent of an important stage line in that territory.

In 1886, after a continuous service of more than a quarter of a century in his favorite occupation, driving a distance of more than 300,000 miles, he returned to his early Kansas home, near Topeka, where he shortly married. His wife died in a year or two, and he afterward drifted overland south into the Indian Territory, remaining there until he died, near Purcell, from a stroke of apoplexy, on Sunday morning, January 14, 1894.

E. P. NICHOLS.
Photo. 1865.

It was seldom that I made a trip across the plains by the old overland stage that I did not ride on the box with Teddy Nichols. While express messenger on the line, in 1863, and while occupying the position of local agent for the post-office department at Latham, Colo., in 1864, I saw him many times, and rode on the box with him hundreds of miles along the Platte during the exciting events that characterized those early days. He made his home at Latham station some months in 1864, and, seeing him as I did every day, opportunity was had to become intimately acquainted with him. We were both then young men. Born in the Empire state, both came to Kansas in the territorial days of 1857, and quite naturally we spent much time talking over scenes of our boyhood and our early Kansas days. We became quite strongly attached. I regarded him as one of my truest and most faithful friends. Time and again have I ridden with him all night on the box, in all kinds of weather; have listened to him tell stories and sing comic songs; have climbed a number of peaks of the Rockies with him; have prospected for the precious metals with him in the Colorado hills; and have enjoyed his company for hours at a time, day and night, in the staging days. Our last meeting on the old stage line was on the upper South Platte, in the spring of 1865. I never saw him but once since; that was in the spring of 1887, after a lapse of twenty-two years, when we met by chance, not to exceed five minutes, in a Topeka street-car. The next and last time he came to his old Topeka home the "grim monster" had claimed him, and he was laid to rest beside the remains of his loving wife in Rochester cemetery, the "silent city of the dead," some two miles north, overlooking the capital city of Kansas.

CHARLES C. HAYNES, born at Liverpool, Medina county, Ohio, March 27, 1837, is doubtless one of the most prominent of the large army of drivers that in the early '60's was employed on the great overland stage route.

Mr. Haynes commenced staging in his native state in 1855, driving on the old Columbus pike, between Cleveland and Medina. In 1856 he went to Michigan, and drove for Humphrey & Hibbard out of Lansing, on the Grand Rapids road, and subsequently was employed on the Detroit road. In 1857 he went to Kalamazoo, and began driving for Patterson & Gleen, on the Allegan road. Later he drove out of Grand Rapids to and from the Detroit & Milwaukee railroad. He naturally feels somewhat proud of the fact that he drove the last team into Grand Rapids, when the first railroad was finished into that city, about the middle of July, 1857, when the palatial steam cars took the place of the more ancient Concord coach.

Leaving Michigan, Haynes then went to Iowa and began driving for the Western Stage Company on the Iowa City and Des Moines road, until the Rock Island railway was finished to within a mile of Iowa City. That part of the Hawkeye state did not please him, and in the fall of 1857 he went to Davenport and traveled with the manager of Van Amburgh's great show as far as St. Louis, visiting all the prominent towns along the way on both sides of the "Father of Waters." While in St. Louis he drove 'bus several months for Valentine & Co., the express men, to and from the railroad depots and steamboat landings.

When the original Overland Mail Company was organized and put into operation, in September, 1858, Haynes went to Tipton, Mo., which by this time had become quite an important staging center, the overland coaches for San Francisco starting semi-weekly from this point. At that time it was the terminus of the Missouri Pacific, the farthest western line of railway east of the Rockies. Here he went into the employ of Moore & Walker, and drove west on the Independence stage road. In 1859, after the close of the border-ruffian excitement in Kansas, he pushed on westward to Leavenworth, then the great metropolis of Kansas Territory, and began driving for the Kansas Stage Company on the old Fort Leavenworth and Fort Riley military road, between Leavenworth and Topeka. Most of the time for nearly two years in the territorial days of Kansas he drove into and out of Topeka, which has since become the state capital and one of the most beautiful cities of its size in the great West.

CHARLES C. HAYNES.
Photo. 1865.

Early in 1861, when the civil war broke out, the overland mail route was changed north to St. Joseph, Mo., but soon afterward Atchison was made the starting-point for the stages. In the latter part of that year Haynes was employed by this company, driving from a number of points on the great line between Atchison and the Rockies, until 1865, when he went to Salt Lake and began work on the Montana road. In 1866 he drifted out to California, and was employed by Wells, Fargo & Co. on the Overland and Dutch Flat road, remaining there until 1868, when he returned to Salt Lake and began driving on the Montana road for Wells, Fargo & Co. In the spring of 1869 he was sent out on the west road between Salt Lake and Austin, Nev., and took charge of the last division, from Jacob's Wells to Shell Creek.

In May, 1869, when the Union and Central Pacific railways were completed and formed the first transcontinental line, Haynes hauled off the stage stock on the "Overland" and put it on the Elko and White Pine road. White Pine at that time was one of Nevada's great silver camps. He then went to driving again, and

Historic stage-coach owned and driven by C. C. Haynes. *Page 292.*

continued until the fall of 1870, when he went into the employ of the Northwestern Stage Company as division agent from Elko, Nev., to Boise City, Idaho. On this important line he had charge of 275 miles of road. In 1872 he was transferred to the old reliable "Overland" from Boise City to Kelton as division agent, and was in charge of that road until 1875. He then went to the Pacific slope and took charge of the permanent road from the end of the Southern Pacific to Bakersfield, Cal., for the Coast Stage Company. He ran this line until the railroad was completed to Los Angeles; then he came east as far as Battle Mountain, Nev., and ran a stage line of his own until 1879, to Tuscarora. He then sold out and returned to Boise City, and again took charge of the "Overland" road for Gilmer, Salisbury & Co., until 1880, when he quit and went to the Wood River country, where he secured a mail contract from Ketchum to Sawtooth City and put into operation a stage line of his own. After running it three months, he sold out and retired to his ranch on Goose creek, where be lived until 1889.

Mr. Haynes has filled a number of important public positions, being deputy United States marshal during Fred DuBois's term.

He bought the Dewey House at Shoshone, in 1889, and kept hotel until he was burned out, in November, 1890. During President Harrison's administration he was deputy United States marshal under Jo Pinkham until his term expired. Since then he has lived in Shoshone, where he is admired by every one. He enjoys a wide acquaintance between the Missouri and the Pacific. He has passed his threescore, and his head and beard are a silvery white. Most of his time is now spent in looking after his town property in Shoshone. He is the owner of one of the old Concord coaches built by the Abbot-Downing Company many years ago, and naturally he is very proud of it. It is a handsome vehicle, not as historic as Buffalo Bill's celebrated Deadwood coach, but one of the finest turned out at the manufactory. The old vehicle is a little marred by Indian bullets and arrows; otherwise he keeps it looking as neat as the day it first came from the "Old Granite State." He runs this stage to the Falls of Shoshone, twenty-six miles, transporting tourists and others who desire to view the wonderful Niagara of the great Northwest and the charming scenery between the two points.

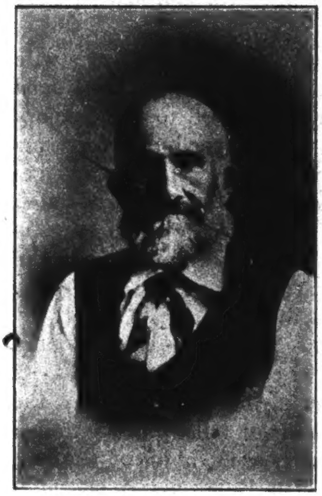
CHARLES C. HAYNES.
Photo. in the '90's.

The old six-horse coach now owned by Mr. Haynes has carried through the romantic and charming scenery of Idaho hundreds and thousands of people, many of them leading citizens from all parts of the country. In July, 1897, Hon. William J. Bryan and his wife and three children rode in it from Shoshone to Blue Lakes and Shoshone Falls, while the distinguished guest was on his trip to the Yellowstone Park. Concerning a previous journey he had made, Mr. Bryan wrote to the editor of the Shoshone *Journal*, under date of May 25, 1897, as follows: "Our driver, Capt. C. C. Haynes, was so experienced, and his six horses so fast, that the twenty-five mile coach ride across the lava-covered plain was made in less than four hours, and neither tiresome nor unpleasant."

Mr. Haynes has been married and has two sons. His wife (Mrs. Nancy R. Haynes) died at Salt Lake, April 16, 1894, aged forty-nine years. A handsome tribute was paid to her memory by the Shoshone (Idaho) *Journal*. It is learned that for years Mrs. Haynes had been a central figure in the religious and benevolent organizations of Shoshone, and there was no work which had for its object the benefiting of humanity in which she was not an active participant. Besides the good work she did in the church organizations, she was an earnest worker in the W. C. T. U., and an active member of Rebekah Lodge, I. O. O. F.

On the overland stage line, in the '60's, there was no more competent, faithful or obliging driver than Charley Haynes. I knew him well, for we were both working for Ben. Holladay, the noted millionaire stage king. Hundreds of miles have I ridden day and night on the box with Charley, in all kinds of weather, over the Kansas prairies, along the Little Blue river, in southern Nebraska, and through the wild buffalo and Indian country on the Platte between Fort Kearney and Cottonwood Springs. That was over a third of a century ago, when we were both young men of the same age; but I remember the time as distinctly as if it were only yesterday. Many a time have I enjoyed listening to him while he related some of his early experiences after he began life for himself on the old Concord stage-coach.

CON SMITH, one of the old stage men of early times, is now a resident farmer near Irving, Marshall county, Kansas. He was born in the State of New York, and is now seventy-four years of age. He came West in 1855, driving stage from Boonville to Tipton, Mo., for three years; from thence to Arkansas, driving from Fort Smith, on what was known as the southern or Butterfield stage line (the Overland Mail Company), on the Boston mountains to Sherman, Tex. The southern route having been discontinued on account of the war, in May, 1861, Smith came North to St. Joseph, Mo., where he took a position as driver on the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express line, then running from the Missouri river to California. His drive was from Guittard's Station to Hollenberg, the first station west of Marysville. In 1862 he enlisted in company H, Seventh Kansas



CON. SMITH.

Cavalry, commanded by Colonel Jennison, serving his country until October 4, 1865, when he received his honorable discharge, and again entered the employ of the stage company. He drove for the Holladay overland stage line, serving until he "threw down the lines" and began farming. He has resided in Marshall county ever since he quit staging, his home being near Irving. Mr. Smith has surrounded himself with many good things, the fruit of untiring industry. He has a family of children who are all doing well for themselves in the upbuilding of their own homes. In this he finds much solace and comfort, his life's coworker not long ago having passed to the "great beyond," and he is waiting hopefully for the meeting of the one who made life so happy for the home that is now so lonely. Looking back far into the years of hope and cheer, he feels no pangs of regret, having never wronged any one, and that the name of Con. Smith is gilt-edged with honor in all his life's dealings with mankind.

Sam. V. Getts, residing at Cascade, Mont., is an old plainsman and overland stage driver. He was born in Monroe county, Pennsylvania, in 1836; lived on a farm until he was fifteen; then served two years as an apprentice at carpenter work. He went to Wisconsin in 1855 and drifted to Leavenworth, Kan., in 1858. Soon after reaching Kansas he went into the employ of the Government. He made his first trip out on the plains, starting for Utah with Morrison's command, but went only as far as Cottonwood Springs. There he met General Harney, who transferred him, and he went back to Leavenworth as teamster. He spent a goodly part of the year 1859 at Topeka, where he first met his friend and afterwards faithful companion, Ed. B. Kilburn. He went to work for the Kansas Stage Company, driving on the Leavenworth and Fort Riley road. He then went to Atchison,

SAMUEL V. GETTS.
Photo. in early '70's.

where he first began driving on the "Overland," working on the eastern division until 1862. For the next four or five years he was driving into and out of Denver. For several months during the spring and summer of 1864 he drove from Denver down the South Platte sixty miles to Latham station. Early in June, 1867, he started for Salt Lake in charge of an outfit of coaches for the stage company. Mr. Getts naturally takes considerable pride in the fact that he took the last mail in the gap that was carried by the overland stage between the Union Pacific and Central Pacific roads, the day before the golden spike was driven, May 10, 1869. The completion of the first transcontinental road echoed the death-knell of the overland stage line, and Getts went to Salt Lake, and from there drove to Ogden and Uintah until the following winter. In 1870 he returned to Montana, driving and superintending for Salisbury until the completion of the Union Pacific's branch line into that region, in 1883, wiped out that important stage line. He then engaged in stock-raising, and has been following it ever since. Mr. Getts is a married man and has two daughters, one twenty-five and one twenty. Both are graduates of good institutions and one is a teacher in the Cascade public schools.

RODNEY P. WEST, who always went by the title of "Bishop West," was one of the best known of all the boys on the overland line. "Bishop" had driven stage in the East, and he had also driven in Iowa and Missouri. He held the lines in several places on the "Overland" between the Missouri river and Salt Lake, ran for some time as messenger from Atchison to Denver, and later was promoted to a division agency between Julesburg and Fort Kearney. During his staging career he had gone through many hardships, having lost his toes by freezing and suffered in many other ways. The "Bishop" was in every sense a moral, conscientious, upright young man, a pleasing conversationalist, quite a good singer, and it was often told of him that he could go into the pulpit and preach a pretty fair sermon. It was only when he was greatly exasperated that he sometimes indulged in anything bordering on profanity. He was a kind-hearted fellow, extremely generous, and universally liked by all who knew him. He died in Montana in the early '90's.

Hon. W. N. Byers, the Denver pioneer and noted journalist, in an interview recently said: "I remember 'Bishop' West, a noted driver on the Idaho Springs, Georgetown and Central road. They used to call him deacon, though how he got the nickname I am sure I can't tell. He was a small man, and crippled. The front part of his feet had been frozen off. But he was as brave as they make them; calm, cool, and a splendid driver. One day he had a party of Eastern men in on the road to Idaho Springs. One insisted on sitting with the driver, and made himself offensive to 'Bishop' all the way up to the top of the mountain. He assumed to know all about staging, from his experiences in New England, and talked a good deal about the magnificent specimens of manhood which were employed as drivers in that part of the country. 'Bishop' looked at his leaders and said nothing. Finally they got to Virginia Cañon, at the top of the ascent. 'Bishop' got out and put in the brake blocks. This amused the Eastern man very much, and he made various funny remarks about it. 'Bishop' said nothing, and they started down the steep descent. They flew along, a steep precipice on one side, and a high bank on the other. Then it would change and be *vice versa*. The tenderfoot grew more and

RODNEY P. WEST.
Photo. 1864.

more paralyzed. His extensive experience had not accustomed him to just that kind of a road. Finally, as the bank came around to his side of the stage again, he made one frantic leap and landed on the hillside. 'Bishop' never checked his horses. He drove into Idaho Springs and then drove on. Some hours later Mr. Tenderfoot followed on foot and had the pleasure of waiting for the next stage."

Lew. M. Hill, one of the "Overland" drivers between Atchison and Denver, was employed in the early '60's on the three eastern divisions of the great stage line. In fact he was a driver and station keeper on the Little Blue and Platte rivers until the building of the transcontinental railway drove off the Concord stage-coach, and practically wiped out the main overland line. Lew. first began driving in Iowa when a young man, way back in the early '50's. In the later '70's and early '80's he went into the mountains of Colorado and was in the employ of the well-known Barlow & Sanderson Stage Company, whose lines extended all over southern and southeastern Colorado. For some time he drove between Alamosa and Del Norte, almost under the shadow of the most beautiful chain of mountains on the face of the globe—the charming Sangre de Cristo range.

From Del Norte Hill drifted west across the continental divide, into the San Juan mining region, driving for a time in the early '80's on the line between Gunnison and Lake City, when those two mining towns were important places, and in their palmiest days. For upwards of a decade he drove out of and into most of the mining towns in the Gunnison country. After the Cripple Creek gold excitement broke out, and stage lines inevitably followed, and were the only means of public conveyance into that new camp, early in the '90's, Lew. went into the new El Dorado, and at intervals drove on all the stage lines centering in that wonderful mining district, up to the fall of 1894.

After the second railroad had made its advent into the Cripple Creek camp, Lew. went back over the range to his home in Gunnison, where his family resided, and soon he was at the head of a stage line running from Gunnison into a new gold-mining camp located some twenty-odd miles to the southwest. Lew. Hill has had a somewhat varied experience. He has now passed his seventieth birthday, but he holds his age remarkably well.

He is probably one of the oldest and, while not one of the most widely known, he is certainly one of the best-preserved and most careful drivers to be found in the Rockies.

One of the noted old stage-drivers of long ago is "UNCLE CHARLEY" MANVILLE, residing in Arkansas. He has been driving for over sixty years. He was born in Ohio, and there he first learned to drive on the old national road. At an early day he was in Michigan, driving on the Detroit road from Howell to Lansing and from Grand Rapids to Kalamazoo. He was in Kansas as early as 1856, where he afterwards drove for the Kansas Stage Company. He drove out of and into Leavenworth in territorial days, thence began driving on the old Santa Fé trail, and not long thereafter was holding the reins of "fours" and "sixes" on the great overland line west of Atchison. For many years he drove in Alabama and Florida. Uncle Charley is now about eighty years of age, but is still vigorous, and can yet handle a wild stage team apparently as easy as when he was in his prime, a third of a century ago.

WILLIAM A. COCHRAN, of Holt county, Missouri, was born at Farmington, Iowa, April 4, 1842, and raised at Winchester, Ill. In the spring of 1861 he moved with his parents to Kansas, and went to work, though but nineteen years of age, driving stage for the Overland Mail Company. In this he continued until the completion of the Union Pacific railway across the continent, in the spring of 1869. While he was in the employ of the "Overland" he drove on five different divisions between Atchison and Salt Lake City. He also drove one winter in the '60's from Nebraska City to Saltello, seven miles south of where now Lincoln, the capital of Nebraska, is located. During the winter of 1864 he ran as "rough-locker" over Bridger's Pass, between Sulphur Springs and North Platte stations. He was on the Texas trail in the early '70's, and has since that time spent several years in southern Kansas. Mr. Cochran holds his age remarkably well, and would easily pass for a man not over fifty. He is a brother of Congressman Cochran, of St. Joseph, and also of A. P. Cochran, an old resident and respected citizen of Atchison. It is a treat to sit down and talk with Cochran about the "Overland" and the lively days of staging across the plains.

Tommy Ryan was one of the original "Overland" boys, having driven on the first semiweekly mail route—the Butterfield line—which went into operation September, 1858, starting west from St. Louis. In 1861, in company with Frank Van Horn, he was one of the party to drive the stock from the southern route across the country to the central route. He drove a long time in Kansas, on the eastern division of the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express route, between Seneca and Guittard's station. In the fall of 1862 he was employed in driving between Denver and Central City, on one of the most rugged and picturesque mountain stage roads in the Rockies.

In 1863 he drove in Colorado, from Junction, on the Bijou, at the east end of the toll-road cut-off, to Valley Station, 150 miles east of Denver, down the South Platte. He afterwards drove in the mountains to Bitter Creek and to Point of Rocks; later, from the head of Bitter creek to Sulphur Springs; still later he drove from Denver east to Living Springs, on the cut-off. Some time afterward he turned up in eastern Nebraska, still driving for Ben. Holladay, but on a branch line on the Nebraska City and Fort Kearney road between Saltello and Beaver Crossing, thence from Nebraska City to Saltello. After the stock on the latter route was taken off, in the summer of 1866, Ryan then drove from Cheyenne southwest to Virginia Dale, the latter station on the stage route between Cheyenne and Denver. Later he turned up again at Nebraska City, having bid adieu to stage-driving, and engaged as brakeman for the Burlington & Missouri River road, where he has been for over a quarter of a century, having been in constant employ of the Burlington, and, for many years, as conductor from Nebraska City to Lincoln.

Balaam Fox, residing in the suburban village of Oakland, Kan., adjoining the city of Topeka, is an old stage-driver. Besides, he served his country in the civil war, enlisting in the Seventh Missouri Infantry. He was born sixty miles east of the Mississippi, in Illinois, and came to Kansas in the '50's, about the time Buffalo Bill came. In 1860 he was on the plains, a bearer of dispatches for Col. E. V. Sumner, First United States Cavalry, from the early spring until late in the fall. He rode from headquarters at Fort Riley to Denver *via* Forts Zarah, Larned, Dodge, Lyon, and Wynkoop. In 1865 he was on the old Santa Fé trail, driving stage on Raton mountains from Gray's ranch, on Picket Wire river, Colo., to McDowell's ranch, on Red river, in New Mexico, a distance of thirty-seven miles. The road was a rough and crooked mountain trail and at times the trip was lonesome. For four months he drove a five-mule team over it both ways in the night. Barlow & Sanderson, then the noted stage men of the Southwest, ran this line, which was equipped with the celebrated Concord coaches. Fox was afterwards transferred farther to the Southwest, driving for some time in the sand-hills, near the Arizona line, from Sabanil to Socorro, N. M.

In the latter part of 1865 he went into the employ of Ben. Holladay, the overland stage man, and for seven months drove eight-horse teams from Snake River, Idaho, to Helena, Mont., a distance of seventy-five miles. He has had a good deal of rough experience one way and another on the plains, since he first drifted out on the frontier. In the '50's he drove an ambulance for General Harney, at the time the latter had the bloody engagement with the Brule Sioux Indians. In this fight General Harney annihilated, at Ash Hollow, on the North Platte, over 500 of the murderous savages. For the next five years, previous to his staging career, Fox was on the plains, part of the time in the employ of the Government, and the balance of the time driving ox and mule teams for Russell, Majors & Waddell, the noted overland freighting firm.

CHAPTER XIII.

OVERLAND FREIGHTING—NEW ROUTES.

IT is doubtful if there was another section of country on the face of the globe over which, in the '60's, passed so much traffic by ox, horse and mule team. A goodly portion of the travel for 200 to 400 miles was along the right or south bank of the South Platte. No railroad had then been built west of the Missouri river. At times there was hardly an hour but what, as far as the eye could reach, there appeared to be almost a solid train of moving, white-covered wagons, or as they were then more familiarly termed "prairie-schooners." Usually the most of these "schooners" were drawn by from four to six yoke of cattle, and the writer counted, from his seat on the stage-coach, along the Platte, between Fort Kearney and old Julesburg, in one day, during the civil war, nearly 900 wagons—to be exact, 888—destined westward on the great overland route. These wagons were drawn by no less than 10,650 animals—cattle, horses, and mules.

In the later '50's, shortly following the breaking out of the so-called Pike's Peak mining excitement, Atchison was selected by the more shrewd and enterprising freighters as a superior outfitting point for trains crossing the plains. It was chosen because it had one of the best steamboat landings on the Missouri river; but more especially because it was at least twelve miles farther west than any other landing in Kansas favorable for freighting, and had the best wagon road in the country leading directly west. Besides, it had telegraphic connection with the East.

Parties interested in other towns were forced to admit that, with its superior advantages, it was the natural point on the Missouri river in Kansas for departure overland. Twenty-four miles west of Atchison, at Kennekuk, the road was intersected by the old overland mail trail from St. Joseph. Leavenworth had laid out a new road west over which it was proposed running the Pike's Peak Express stages in the spring of 1859, as well as the mule and ox trains outfitted for Denver and the new mountain mining camps just coming into prominence. A branch road to intersect this route was also opened from Atchison in the spring of 1859, by an expedition fitted out and directed by Judge F. G. Adams, an early resident of that city, and one of the prominent pioneer free-state citizens of Kansas.

The expedition started out due west from Atchison in March, over the "Parallel" road, through Muscotah and America City, crossing the Big Blue river near Blue Rapids, reaching the Republican river at Clifton. Following up the latter stream on the north side, to about where Norway, Republic county, now is, it crossed the Republican, and passed westward, intersecting the Jones & Russell Pike's Peak road at a station on a branch of the Limestone, in Jewell county, thirty-one miles west of the Republican crossing. This was station No. 11 on the "Express" road, 172 miles from Atchison on Judge Adams's route, and 237 miles from Leavenworth on the Pike's Peak Express route.

The object of the Atchison expedition, started soon after the Pike's Peak gold excitement, was to open a shorter route to the mountains from the great western bend of the Missouri river, at Atchison than the one opened from Leavenworth by the Pike's Peak Express Company. The route was thus shortened by sixty-five miles, or fully twelve hours' time, as the stage ran.

Mr. E. D. Boyd, an accomplished engineer employed by Judge Adams, measured the entire distance from Atchison to Denver, taking astronomical observations at convenient points. He also made a report showing distances between stations, and the latitude and longitude of each; likewise the crossing of the streams and brief descriptions of the entire route. This report was published the following June in the Atchison *Champion*, and is probably the only complete description of the route ever made.

According to this report, the distance from Atchison to Denver was 620 miles, and from Leavenworth 685 miles; while the old military road from Fort Leavenworth, *via* Fort Kearney and the Platte, to Denver, was 678 miles. The distance from Atchison by the old military road was only 653 miles. But this new route—notwithstanding it was thirty-five miles shorter than any other—was almost immediately abandoned, and was never traveled by an ox or mule train from Atchison. This was for the reason that the established military road *via* Fort Kearney and along the Platte river valley afforded Government protection from the Indians and was settled at convenient intervals along nearly the entire distance. For over 500 miles on the Leavenworth route there was not a house.

History tells us that the site of Atchison was known by the old French voyageurs as the "Grand Detour of the Missouri." During the period of overland freighting on the plains, more trains started from Atchison than from any other point on the river. The leading Atchison firms in the early '60's engaged in the freighting business were Stebbins & Porter, Dennison & Brown, Hockaday, Burr & Co., J. S. Galbraith, George W. Howe, and a few others. Some of the lesser firms were Brown Bros., E. K. Blair, I. N. Bridgman, Roper & Nesbit, Harrison Bros., Henry Reisner, J. C. Peters, P. K. Purcell, R. E. Wilson, Will Addoms, George I. Stebbins, John C. Bird, Giles B. Buck, Wm. Home, Amos Howell, and perhaps a dozen others.

It used to cost something to ship to Denver in overland freighting days, for everything transported across the plains before the railroads were built was taken by the pound instead of (as now) the hundred. Flour, bacon, molasses, whisky, furniture, trunks, etc., were each carried at pound rates. In the later '50's and early '60's the rates per pound on stuff shipped by ox and mule wagon from Atchison to Denver were as follows:

Flour	$0 09	Crackers	$0 17
Tobacco	12½	Whisky	18
Sugar	13½	Glass	19½
Bacon	15	Trunks	25
Dry-goods	15	Furniture	31

The rates on shipments of corn, flour, hay, coffee, bacon, sugar, salt, dry-goods, hardware, clothing, etc., were nearly all the same. It seems a wonder that the country in the Rocky Mountain gold region was not bankrupted by the high prices which ruled in those early days. It doubtless would have been ruined had it not been possessed of vast mineral wealth and the other wonderfully rich resources with which it was believed the region abounded.

Few persons except those who saw with their own eyes can have a correct idea of the enormous amount of traffic on the overland route in those early days. There were trains constantly outfitting and crossing the plains from Omaha, Nebraska City, St. Joseph, Atchison, Leavenworth, and a few other points. This, it should be remembered, was before the railroads had passed west of the Missouri river, and everything had to be hauled by oxen, mules, or horses. Twenty-one days was about the time required for a span of horses or mules to make the trip to Denver and keep the stock in good condition; and they walked all the way. For ox trains, the average time was five weeks, thus making the distance of from eighteen to twenty miles a day. To make the trip to Salt Lake it took horses and mules about six weeks; ox trains were on the road from sixty-five to seventy days.

During the mining excitement in the '60's the patient ox was the old-reliable propelling power utilized along the Platte. Oxen transported, for a decade or more, a considerable portion of the vast commerce of the plains. These patient animals, though slow in their movements, were always reliable. To the wagon-train bosses they were the surest and safest for hauling a large part of the freight destined for the towns and cities on the plains and in the mountains west of the Missouri river. To be sure horses were used to a certain extent in the transportation business, but not so much as mules. In performing their work the mules were next to oxen. They were tough, could endure fatigue, and were nearly always reliable. Besides, they could be kept much cheaper than horses. Horses were all right for mounting cavalrymen and in maneuvering artillery at the forts along the Platte, but, simmered down to the important matter of transporting army supplies, the mule invariably stood at the front. A considerable portion of the promiscuous freighting by private individuals was done by oxen. Nearly all who thoroughly understood the freighting business regarded the ox team as the cheapest and best method of transporting ordinary merchandise. The ox could invariably be relied on. Heavy, dead weight, such as mining and other machinery, stoves, hardware, salt, etc., except in very rare cases, was shipped by ox trains. Much of the flour, bacon, canned goods, groceries, dry-goods, clothing, etc., went by horses or mules, for they could make the distance about two weeks quicker than oxen.

The year 1859 was a remarkable one in the history of Atchison, the growth of the city that year being unparalleled since the founding of the town in 1855, by Messrs. Kelly, Abell, Stringfellow, and others. At the beginning of 1860 it had great promise for the future from the prominence it had gained as the best point on the Missouri river for outfitting to Pike's Peak and Salt Lake. At that time Irwin & McGraw were prominent contractors for supplying the various military posts on the Western frontier. They were experienced with everything on the plains and naturally selected the best place for starting their trains. The mere fact that the Government trains were to be started from Atchison gave the place wonderful prestige as a superior overland freighting and outfitting point.

No one could question the commercial importance of Atchison during the spring of 1860, because no other city in the great Missouri valley enjoyed such advantages in the way of overland transportation. It was nothing unusual to see two or three steamboats lying at the levee discharging freight, and as many more on the river in sight, either above or below the city. It is true the Hannibal & St. Joseph railroad had been completed to its western terminus, twenty miles up the river, but nine-tenths of all the freight for Atchison still came up the river by steamboat from St. Louis.

Occasionally a boat would load up with freight at Pittsburg or Cincinnati for points on the Missouri and come through—down to the mouth of the Ohio and up the Mississippi and Missouri to Atchison. Nearly every boat that arrived from St. Louis in those days brought a large cargo. It was no uncommon thing, during the spring of 1860, to see great quantities of freight, in the shape of thousands of wagons and ox-yokes, mining machinery, boilers, and other material, and the provisions necessary to supply the thousands of people then flocking to the great West. Tons of stuff were piled on the levee and in the warehouses. It was common to see immense quantities of heavy freight stacked up for several blocks along the levee, and every warehouse was packed with groceries, provisions, clothing, boots and shoes, etc., awaiting transportation by the slow-going ox and mule trains.

While a boat would be lying at the levee discharging freight, it was often quite amusing to the crowd of lookers-on eagerly watching every movement of the laborers. As the gang of deckhands, made up mostly from plantation darkeys, were carrying hams, bacon, dry sides, sacks of coffee, sugar, potatoes, dried apples and peaches, flour, meal, beans, etc., from the steamer and piling them up in front of the warehouses on the levee, sometimes the most ludicrous scenes of wild excitement followed. More often than otherwise, when unloading a steamboat, things would go wrong and greatly annoy the captain and mates. It

TRANSPORTING SUPPLIES ON THE PLAINS IN EARLY '60's.

was the hardest kind of work to discharge from the boat a heavy cargo of freight. From long hours of labor some of the deck-hands naturally would be completely played out, and this seemed to exasperate the officers in charge. Apparently they had no mercy for the worn-out toilers. It didn't take much to annoy the first or second mate of a Missouri river steamboat, and if in an unpleasant mood they would let off a volley of cuss-words, addressing the fellow as a "—— lazy, lousy son of a gun," or something worse, and reminding him if he didn't "get a move on himself" he would "take a slippery-elm club and maul the life out of him." This was the commonest talk in steamboat days on the Missouri river forty years ago, but the darkeys finally became so used to it that they appeared not to mind it much.

The Pike's Peak gold excitement, in the spring of 1860, was raging almost at fever heat. Frequent reports were brought in by prospectors and others coming from the new diggings. Some of those returning told of fabulous discoveries being made in the new El Dorado. Others, disappointed in the way things had gone, declared there was little or nothing in the line of precious metals to be found there. More often than otherwise, in 1859, the new mines were designated as a humbug.

While an indefinite section of the mining country was then known as the "Pike's Peak Region," really the "Peak," while plainly in sight, was nearly 100 miles distant to the southwest of Cherry creek, the nearest diggings. What is now Colorado—that portion where the gold was first found—was then laid down as "Arapahoe county, Kansas." Some called it the "Cherry Creek Region"; to others it was known as "The Gold Fields of Western Kansas." In spite of the discouraging reports of some of those who returned disappointed and "busted," persons would occasionally come in with a sack of yellow dust, and soon return with a stock of goods to supply the wants of the multitudes then steadily pouring into the new mining region.

Except those who have crossed the plains in the days of overland staging and freighting, few can have a just conception of the enormous business that was done in the early '60's. The greater part of the traffic was over the old military road, along the south bank of the Platte river. Often there could be seen a string of four- and six-horse (and mule) teams and six to eight yoke of cattle hauling the biggest heavily loaded wagons. Frequently a train a mile long might be seen on the road. Many times a number of trains could be seen together, and the white, canvas-covered vehicles extended for many miles, or as far as the eye could see.

Conspicuous were the ox trains of Russell, Majors & Waddell, of Leavenworth. Their ponderous wagons were made to order in St. Louis and built so they could carry from 5000 to 7000 pounds of merchandise. While engaged in the transportation business, and when everything was brisk, this firm owned and operated 6250 wagons, with a drove of oxen numbering about 75,000 head. Yoked together and hitched to the wagons, this would make a train forty miles long.

These men were a remarkable trio. Their names composed the most noted firm in the country engaged in freighting overland during the later '50's and '60's. The business conducted by the firm was enormous—being carried on almost exclusively for the Government—and immense sums of money were invested in their outfit.

In the fall of 1857 they transported Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston's army, with its vast military stores and subsistence, from Fort Leavenworth across the plains and over the Rockies to Utah, at the breaking out of the Mormon rebellion that memorable year. They were also engaged for many years in transporting supplies for the Government, and for a long time did the greater part of the freighting to all the military posts in the Western Territories. They employed thousands of men, wagons, cattle, and mules, and they received and expended, annually, millions of dollars in carrying on their business.*

In Russell, Majors & Waddell's outfits the number of wagons in a train was twenty-five, officered as follows: A captain, who acted as wagon-master; assistant wagon-master; the extra hands; the night herder; a cavallard driver, whose duty it was to attend to the extra cattle. Besides these, there was a driver for each team, making a complete force of thirty-one men for a train. The ox trains were designated as "bull trains"; the wagon boss was known as the "bull-wagon boss"; the teamsters or drivers,

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*Russell, Majors & Waddell were among the pioneers of Kansas, having established themselves in the forwarding business at Leavenworth way back in the early '50's. They were the leading firm on the Missouri river engaged in transportation overland, and it is only a few years since the plain old sign bearing the name of the noted firm was taken down from the place where it was first put up, more than forty years ago, at the corner of Shawnee and Main streets.

"bull-whackers." Every man was thoroughly drilled and knew his place. He was also well armed and expected to know how to "fall in" when an attack was made by the redskins.

This firm was the oldest and most widely known of those that traversed the plains. For many years they were the Government contractors for transporting military stores to all the posts on the frontier. Besides, they had large contracts with Brigham Young, the noted Mormon leader, as well as with many of the prominent business men in Utah, for freighting their supplies from the Missouri river to the "City of the Saints." The first and the last of this great forwarding firm (Russell and Waddell) died many years ago, but the life of Alexander Majors was spared until 1899, when he had nearly reached his fourscore and ten.

On account of the steadily increasing Indian troubles along the Platte in the latter part of the summer and fall of 1864, many of the overland freighters, especially those with only a few teams and whose means were somewhat limited, were forced to abandon the business for the time being. As matters then were, with the savages for hundreds of miles along the route—even with the high prices that ruled along the Platte and in Colorado—the freighters could not be induced to longer risk their scalps in the money-making occupation of hauling goods across the plains. Quite naturally traffic by this great route was almost stopped, and in consequence there was for a time an advance in the cost of freighting between the Missouri river and Denver.

As the dangers in traversing the plains increased, prices on the overland route naturally advanced. For two-thirds of the way between the Missouri and the Rockies, for everything in the line of groceries and provisions, prices went up rapidly during the summer and fall of that year. It was all in consequence of the embargo placed along the highway by the savages.

Ordinary freight-rates were advanced from nine cents to twenty-five cents per pound. All kinds of provisions and breadstuffs kept rising until they reached famine prices. In some instances merchants in the mining camps of Central City and Black Hawk were obliged to pay for transportation as high as thirty and even forty cents per pound on some merchandise, especially on classes of goods that were of a light but bulky nature.

Flour in the Denver market was so plentiful the preceding July that it sold at the cost of freight alone (nine dollars per hundred). In October it rose to twenty-four dollars per hundred, and bounded to forty dollars per hundred at Central City, forty miles from Denver, in the mountains. A meal at a stage station on the South Platte sixty miles below Denver, early in October, 1864, cost two dollars; and even at these figures hungry passengers apparently were as eager to partake of a "square meal" as they were when the price at the same place a few months before ranged from "six bits" to a dollar.

Almost everything possible was done for the protection of those engaged in overland traffic. An order was issued by the war department, the last of February, 1866, for wagon-trains to rendezvous at Fort Kearney. In the order it was stipulated that no train of less than twenty wagons and thirty men, thoroughly organized, would be permitted to pass beyond Fort Kearney into the Indian country.

Mr. A. C. McMakin, now a citizen of Atchison, was, in the later '60's, when the Indians were at war with the immense travel along the Platte, stationed out on the overland route. His duty was to get the names of all parties freighting across the plains and organize them into companies, with a captain chosen to command, whose duty it was to report to an officer at Fort Kearney. The freighters were detained at the military post only long enough to get a sufficient number who could go together in safety. At Cottonwood Springs, the end of the first 100 miles from Fort Kearney, it was the duty of the "captain" in charge to report at the military headquarters at Fort McPherson. The same plan was gone through farther west, at Fort Sedgwick (near old Julesburg), and at Camp Wardwell (near the Junction), the rendezvous being about 100 miles apart. By doing this, and keeping together in sufficient numbers, the freighters were seldom afterward molested in going up and down the Platte valley.

Owing to the scarcity of troops, and the amount of country to be covered and protected by patrol, it was impossible to furnish sufficient troops to patrol both sides of the Platte river, and all emigrants and freighters coming up on the north side of the river were compelled to cross the stream at Fort Kearney, the journey then being continued on the south side. The crossing, like all other streams in that country, was very precarious, owing to the quicksand and shifting of channel; it took men and teams that were experienced in crossing; so there were persons in the vicinity

A typical bull train on the plains.

who made it a business of doing this, if they got their price, which usually was ten dollars per wagon. They would always get the parties over in safety, being provided with cattle that were thoroughly trained, and in this way they experienced little or no difficulty in crossing.

Much trouble was experienced with the Indians in the summer of 1865 along the stage route west of Camp Collins. In July most of the stock was stampeded, seriously delaying the running of stages and transmission of the mail. Tons of mail matter destined for Salt Lake, Montana, Nevada and the Pacific coast accordingly accumulated at Fort Halleck, where as many as half a dozen large Government wagon-loads of it were transported west as far as Green river, under an escort of cavalry. The long delay in the stopping of the mail was practically a repetition of the scenes that had occurred along the Platte during the summer and fall of 1864, when the Indians for six weeks had possession of several hundred miles of the overland line.

Along the Platte for fully 400 miles fuel was indispensable, and extremely scarce in certain places. It could be bought, but it was worth at different points from $50 to $100 a cord. Between

Fort Kearney and Cottonwood Springs, 100 miles, and between the latter point and Denver, 300 miles, there was very little fuel near at hand. In the cañons a few miles south of Cottonwood Springs, however, there were large quantities of cedar, and many availed themselves of the opportunity of laying in a supply there sufficient to last several days.

Freighters experienced with the plains used to have a small log or perhaps several poles tied together and carried under the bed of the wagon. These they would take along with them on their journey. On camping for the night, if there was no other fuel at hand, they would cut enough from their reserve supply to cook supper and breakfast. Gasoline and that kind of stoves were then unknown. Often a single log or a few poles would be carried from 100 to 200 miles or more before cutting any of it, so careful were the experienced plainsmen of their limited supply of fuel for cooking meals.

Among the men most prominent and conspicuous on the plains engaged exclusively in the freighting business for the overland stage line during the '60's were the widely known Carlyle brothers—Henry and Alexander—whom I met many times in 1863 and 1864. They were in partnership with Holladay in transportation of subsistence. Two men more highly esteemed could not be found on the overland route. Much of the time they made their headquarters at Fort Kearney, that being the junction of Holladay's branch stage lines to Omaha and Nebraska City. The boys were old acquaintances of the great stage man, having known him years before in western Missouri. Besides, they were old-timers on the plains, and, being associated with Holladay in freighting grain and supplies, did all that business for the stage line along the Platte and points on the frontier. It required an enormous amount of hay and grain to feed the large number of stage animals on the overland route, but the Carlyles, from their long experience and life on the plains, were equal to every emergency. Their contracts were performed with the utmost speed and with entire satisfaction.*

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*Some immense wagon-trains at different times crossed the plains before the era of railroads west of the Missouri river. Russell, Majors & Waddell were among the most conspicuous with long trains, for many years being employed as Government contractors. Probably the largest train that was ever seen west of the Missouri went over the old Santa Fe trail during General Custer's memorable campaign against the Indians in the winter of 1868. In it were over 800 army wagons, each drawn by six mules. When strung out four abreast for travel, as was often done, the train was over a mile in length.

There was a great demand along the entire overland route, during staging and freighting days in the '60's, for almost everything in the shape of literature. Nearly every one wanted reading-matter of some kind to break the monotony while passing his leisure hours. The large number of drivers, stock tenders, station keepers and other employees on the stage line alone made a good market for nearly everything of this kind. Then there were thousands comprising the great army of ox and mule drivers, freighters, and herders, in addition to the hunters, trappers, and ranchmen. Besides, there was a considerable number of tourists *en route*. In addition, there were frequent invalids going across the plains in search of health, nearly all with appetites thirsting for something to read.

Newspapers, more than anything else in the line of reading-matter, were wanted by the masses. Magazines, periodicals, books, and the light, trashy, "blood and thunder" novels were each eagerly sought after, according to different tastes. But the dime novels of the past quarter of a century were unknown in the old staging days. Few novels were sold on the plains in the '60's for less than fifty to seventy-five cents. It was extremely difficult to get anything of the kind because of the scarcity of post-offices. Along the Little Blue river there was only one post-office. Between Valley City and Denver, on the Platte, in 1863, there were four only in a distance of over 400 miles.

Late Eastern daily papers—those not over ten days old—went off in a hurry all along the great overland highway. The St. Louis dailies were the newspapers then most sought after, for they were in all respects metropolitan journals during the exciting war times, and were considered reliable. In the '60's St. Louis was the leading commercial metropolis of the great West, being considerably ahead of Chicago, then her most conspicuous rival. Kansas City did not have 10,000 population in the '60's.

It was little trouble to get fifteen cents for the *Democrat* and *Republican*—really the only prominent dailies then published in St. Louis—and often as high as twenty-five cents was paid just to read the account of a great battle, which was equivalent to the loan of the paper for a short time on the overland route during the civil war.

Denver's pioneer paper, the *Rocky Mountain News*, then only about one-quarter its present size, went off like hot cakes down the Platte as far as Old California Crossing, and readily brought from ten to twenty-five cents. For either *Harper's Weekly* or *Frank Leslie's Illustrated* it was no trouble to get "two bits." The few leading magazines published in the '60's often sold for fifty to seventy-five cents; a late *Harper's Monthly* occasionally bringing as high as one dollar when a person appreciating such literature wanted something first class for Sunday reading.

The yellow-covered novelettes that now sell for from three to five cents each went off readily at twenty-five and thirty-five cents along the Platte in those days.

In 1865 one dollar was offered for a newspaper not over ten days' old. The anxious purchaser was one of Ben. Holladay's stock tenders, "ragged, shaggy, sunburnt, and unkempt." The poor fellow was almost crazy to learn the news, not having seen a paper for more than a fortnight.

The brisk period of the overland trade extended from 1859 to 1869, during which time there was on the plains and in the mountains a floating population approximating nearly 250,000. The most of this population produced little of the necessaries and comforts of life and had to be supplied from the Missouri river. The biggest rush of overland traffic was from 1863 to 1866. The closing year of the civil war the travel was immense, the larger part of the emigration going into the new gold mining camps being developed in the Northwest.

The transportation business was enormous all through the '60's. Most of the freighters who used to slowly trudge along the way up the Platte valley, driving from four to six yoke of patient oxen, every day eagerly watched for the old stage. They looked upon the four-horse and six-horse overland coach as a vehicle distanced only by a lightning-express train.

I well remember an incident that took place while making my periodical runs in the summer of 1863 as messenger on the overland stage line from Atchison to Denver. An Atchison freighter had just pulled out with his ox train on Monday morning, a few minutes before the regular hour of departure for the express coach. I passed him on Eighth street, then at the extreme western business part of the city, and reached Denver in six days. Remaining there two days I started on my return trip to Atchison. On my way down on this run I met and chatted briefly again with my friend somewhere near the head waters of the Little Blue river, near the divide, perhaps twenty-five miles southeast of Fort Kearney. I reached Atchison, remaining a week before starting out again. On my way west the next trip I passed my friend again with his ox train and chatted a moment with him on the South Platte. I reached Denver, stopping two days, then returned to Atchison on my regular trip, meeting him again on my way east. Remaining another week in Atchison, I pulled out with the stage-coach once more for the Colorado metropolis, never for a moment dreaming of seeing the freighter on the way with his ox train. Imagine my surprise, however, when, within a few miles of Denver, I was greeted with his familiar voice. He spoke to me, and inquired the latest war news; also the local happenings at Atchison, where we both had so long resided. During the time he had been making this trip of 653 miles with his oxen—traveling every day except Sundays—I had ridden five times across the plains, a distance of 3265 miles, during which time I had laid by eighteen days—four in Denver and fourteen in Atchison. Running an ox train in the early '60's gave the freighter an excellent opportunity to know the importance of the overland stage as a rapid means of journeying across the plains. This was several years before the neigh of the iron horse had ever echoed on the "Great American Desert."

LOST ON THE PLAINS IN A BLIZZARD. *Page 319.*

CHAPTER XIV.

APPOINTED MAIL AGENT AT LATHAM.

FOR making a round trip every three weeks, the limited salary of an overland express messenger was not sufficient remuneration. The responsibility was too great, to say nothing of the hardships necessarily incident to performing the arduous duties. It was a terrible task to ride six successive days and nights across the plains without the opportunity of disrobing. In short, the work was getting to be a little monotonous. As I then felt, there was not wealth enough in the mines of Colorado to induce me longer to continue in the business, while hostile Indians were on the war-path. Besides, highwaymen had already appeared at various sections along the "Overland" line throughout the West and Northwest.

Before I had decided to quit, John J. Ingalls and Albert H. Horton, two prominent young attorneys, had effected a lease of the *Champion* office, at Atchison. Both were warm friends of mine, from an acquaintance of several years, and they urged me to go in with them and take my old place as foreman of the establishment at a stipulated weekly salary. A contract was made, and I took hold and worked a few weeks. While thus engaged, Hon. A. N. Zevely, of Washington, then Third Assistant Postmaster-general, had just made a trip over the entire stage line. His business was to learn, if possible, of the irregularities existing, and also to find out where any improvements could be made in the overland mail service. On his return from California he spent several days in Atchison in consultation with Gen. Bela M. Hughes, general counsel for the stage line, and with other officials in the employ of the company.

Mr. Zevely drafted a new way-bill for use in connection with the overland mail system, which he desired to have printed; and a note was sent to the *Champion* office, and I was designated to go to his room at the Massasoit House and advise with him about the printing. I had had nearly two years' experience in the dispatching of the overland mail-pouches from the Atchison post-office to the various points along the route westward, and so volunteered a few suggestions to the Washington official, which were accepted as timely. Two or three forms of mail way-bills were prepared, and I printed them by order of the department official, proofs having previously been submitted to him. He departed with the printed matter on Saturday for St. Joseph, Mo. The next morning I was agreeably surprised to receive from him the following note:

"ATCHISON, October 31, 1863.

"*Frank Root, Esq.:* DEAR SIR—I shall advise the appointment of a local agent at Latham, and also an agent to travel on the overland mail route. If you wish, I will recommend you for one of these places. Answer me at St. Joseph on Monday. I do not know what the pay will be, but may say it will not be *less* than $900 per annum. Say nothing about this, or there will be too many applicants. Yours, etc., A. N. ZEVELY."

I promptly replied to the note and gave an affirmative answer, but heard nothing until the following telegram was received, on the morning of November 23:

"WASHINGTON, November 21, 1863.

"*To Frank Root, Atchison:* You are appointed local agent at Latham, at $1000 a year. Instructions by mail. A. N. ZEVELY,
Third Assistant Postmaster-general."

I made preparations to start on short notice after receiving instructions, which came to hand a few days after my appointment. Accordingly I left Atchison November 30, and reached my destination a little less than eight and one-half days, or three days behind schedule time. It was one of the most trying trips I ever had across the plains. The second night out from Atchison, in the Little Blue valley, we were caught in a fearful blizzard, and at intervals encountered snow from two to five feet in depth. We also had the misfortune to break down along the river; and, besides, were unavoidably detained several hours on account of having to wait for stock at Kiowa, an important station on that stream. As the stage slowly moved westward, more snow was encountered all the way to Fort Kearney than I had ever before known on the overland route. Way up on the Platte, a few miles west of Cottonwood Springs, owing to the slippery road, caused by a storm of rain and sleet, and because the stock was not roughshod, the passengers, and all hands on the stage, were obliged to help push the vehicle with the heavy load up the few steep, slippery grades. For the next 100 miles the roads were heavy and slow progress was made.

After leaving American Ranch, about seven o'clock in the evening, we were caught in a severe snow- and wind-storm—a regular old-fashioned plains blizzard—and the night being dark we lost the road, and wandered about for four or five hours. The outlook was anything but encouraging. I was on the box with the driver facing the storm, but it was impossible to see ahead twice the length of the coach. Neither of us could tell where we were or in which direction the road lay, and everything indicated that we must stop there all night, and, perhaps, lose the team by freezing. But we managed a little before midnight, by the instinct of the faithful stage animals, and very much to our surprise, to pull up at Beaver Creek station. The storm was still raging and, what seldom occurred on the overland line, we were obliged to lie up until morning.

FRANK A. ROOT.
Overland mail agent at Latham station, 1863-'64.

Many rough snow-storms have I encountered in Kansas, Nebraska, and on the plains, but was never caught in one more severe than this. We lay down on the floor at the station, rolled up in our blankets and robes for a few hours' sleep, got an early breakfast, and, with fresh team and a new driver, rolled out from Beaver Creek by daylight, the storm in the meantime having subsided. But it had left drifts like miniature mountains in many places, so that for the next sixty miles westward to my destination the team could not go out of a walk.

On the morning of December 8, 1863, I entered upon my duties as local agent of the post-office department at Latham,* and continued there until the middle of the following October, at which time the stage route was changed to the Denver cut-off, twenty-five or thirty miles to the south. By this change Latham was forever abandoned, after only something like a year's existence. And, "lest we forget it," be it known that Latham was in Weld county, on the south fork of the Platte, a little below the mouth of the Cache la Poudre river,[*] and about sixty miles northeast of Denver. Weld county at that time extended east to the Kansas line and north to the Nebraska line. A half-dozen additional counties have since been carved out of it: Logan, Morgan, Phillips, Sedgwick, Washington, and Yuma. Weld still remains one of the richest agricultural counties in the state.[†]

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*Latham was almost due east, not to exceed three and a half miles, from the present sites of Greeley and Evans. From the station south it was a level, gravelly, sandy plain as far as the eye could see. It was practically the same all along the south fork of the Platte, except at intervals there were clusters of cottonwood and willows. Some of the gulches extending at right angles to the river had an occasional small cedar grove, the trees being badly stunted. Freighters and pilgrims by the Platte route used to cut the cedars and use them for fuel in cooking while camping; so they were soon all gone. Buf-

Latham was named in honor of Milton S. Latham,[‡] one of

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falo- or bunch-grass was abundant all along the valley, and this made the finest pasturage. Stock grew fat on it. Cattle would leave the taller grass along the banks of the stream and gradually move back on higher ground to the nutritious buffalo-grass, which appeared the natural feed for them. It was practically the same nearly all the way from Latham up the Cache la Poudre river to Laporte, thirty-five miles—a natural stock country, but thought to be comparatively worthless as an agricultural region. The country east of the base of the mountains, at Laporte, where the Cache la Poudre rushes from the foot-hills to its junction with the South Platte near Latham, and from the latter station sixty miles southwest to Denver, along the north side of the Platte, is undoubtedly one of the richest agricultural portions of Colorado. The region embraces the valleys of the St. Vrain and Thompson and their tributaries, and is very fertile. It is pronounced unsurpassed for the production of wheat, rye, oats, barley, potatoes, and nearly all kinds of vegetables. The variety of potatoes known as the "Greeley" practically has no equal in flavor and none can command the price it does in market. As a fruit-growing region it has long since been demonstrated to be one of the best. The berries raised in that vicinity command enormous prices, for nothing can compare with them. The Greeley colony—named for the lamented journalist—started in the spring of 1870 with a fund of $150,000. This was judiciously invested in lands, irrigating canals, a mill power, and a "colony fence," enclosing the entire tract, thus for some time saving any further expense in building individual fences. Wheat has long been the great staple raised by the colony and its yield most of the time has been enormous, often as high as forty or fifty bushels per acre being realized, which has brought from ninety cents to $1.50 per bushel.

[*] The Cache la Poudre is an important stream. It has several prominent tributaries, among which are the Big and Little Thompson, Lone Tree, Box Elder, St. Vrain, and Crow creeks. Irrigating canals now run through the unsurpassed agricultural section, with numerous ditches, leading in all directions, which furnish ample moisture for the hitherto vast arid region.

[†] The original county-seat of Weld county was located at old St. Vrain. Later it was given a temporary abode at the houses of two neighboring ranchmen. Next it went to Latham, four or five miles from Greeley and three miles due east from Evans, and remained for several years, that town and Greeley being about four miles apart. There was a lively competition between the two latter towns, and for several years there was a bitter county-seat fight, first one getting it and then the other. The election in 1877 settled the contest, when Greeley won the prize, and ever since it has remained there. Greeley is a temperance town, never having had a saloon, while Evans is a licensed-liquor town.

[‡] Senator Latham was a passenger over the stage line in November, 1862, on his way from California to Washington. While at Salt Lake the council tendered him the hospi-

California's distinguished senators of an early day. The stage station was the only house there. It was a substantially built one-and-one-half-story log structure, fronting south. There was a large one-story, rough-board addition built on the north side, fronting both east and west, in which were a large dining-room, kitchen, bedroom, and a storehouse. Its location was important. It was the junction of the branch stage line to Denver, and stages made close connections east and also with the main line to Salt Lake and California. Besides, it was a storehouse for supplies for three divisions, and this made it the most important way station on the overland route between Atchison and Placerville.

Prominent as Latham was in 1864, the name of it at this late day is seldom mentioned. There are scores of people born in Weld county and still living there who probably have never heard of this station which was wiped out five years before the capital of the county was dreamed of. There are hundreds of people now residing in the vicinity who could tell little or nothing of the history of the old station as it was in the palmy days of overland staging.

It was during Lincoln's first administration that I held my position. A portion (and the most important part) of my duties was the checking and dispatching of the through overland mails destined for California, Salt Lake, and leading points in Nevada and Montana. The position was one of importance at that time, and of great responsibility. Previous to the location of an agent there, thoughtless drivers or stock tenders, in reloading the mails on the coaches, when two or three Concords were standing in front of the office waiting to be loaded, would carelessly throw on the mail-sacks so that California and Montana mails would be returned to Atchison and east-bound mail-pouches sent back to Salt Lake and to the Pacific.

To obviate this perplexing and seemingly inexcusable annoyance was a part of my duty while in the service of the post-office department at Latham. At times it was a rather lonesome position to fill; but while the stages were standing there, and a score or two of passengers, representing various nationalities, were tak-

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tality of the city. The distinguished senator returned his thanks for the courtesy, but on account of his brief stay was unable to accept. The Mormon leaders remembered the minority vote of Senators Latham and McDougall against the anti-polygamy bill and other courtesies rendered by the former to Utah's representative at the national capital, and, it is supposed, the offer was in recognition of these services.

ing their meals, it was the busiest way station on the line; but, of course, this was only for a brief time each day.

The eating station was kept by Mr. W. S. McIlvain, a genial, warm-hearted man, who was also the stage company's agent. With the aid of his estimable wife, assisted by Miss Lizzie Trout, whose services had been secured at ten dollars a week as cook, he gained the reputation of keeping one of the best eating-houses on the entire line of nearly 2000 miles. "Mac," as he was widely known, was originally from Kentucky, and was noted for his hospitality. He spared no pains to have his table supplied with the best to be found in the Denver market. He bought the very best coffee, paying one dollar per pound for it. He also bought fresh butter and eggs from the ranchmen in the vicinity, often paying $1.25 per pound for the former and $1.50 per dozen for the latter. The price of nearly everything else used on the table was in proportion.

MISS LIZZIE TROUT.
Photo. 1864.

Except at the hours when the stages arrived and departed each day, the station at Latham was a desolate and lonesome place. The nearest neighbor was a ranchman named Westlake, nearly three-quarters of a mile southwest toward Denver. He was on the main road and kept a gin-mill and a few goods for sale to the ranchmen in the neighborhood. He made the most of his money selling "cold pizen" to the numerous freighters and ox drivers passing up and down the Platte.

There was little of interest to admire in the immediate vicinity, but to the west a distance of fifty miles or more were the Rocky Mountains, the sides green with pine and quaking asp, and the peaks and summit most of the time covered with snow. Between Latham and the mountains were also two quite important streams—the St. Vrain and Thompson—tributaries of the Cache la

Poudre. To the south of the station for several miles the ground was apparently as level as the floor. A few rods to the north the clear waters of the South Platte and an occasional tree or cluster of willows and cottonwood saplings along the banks of the Cache la Poudre broke the monotony in that direction. Cacti covered thousands of acres and sage-brush was very plentiful. Near where the beautiful, progressive town of Greeley is situated was quite a grove of large cottonwoods, which added not a little to the appearance of the distant landscape.

While it was against the rules of the stage authorities to allow any liquor about the station, the thirsty drivers and stock tenders knew they could always get a drink or a private bottle filled at Westlake's. They had often heard the pioneer ranchman and keeper of the place say that he might run short on the "luxuries of life," but the "necessaries" he would always keep in stock.

Calls from neighbors were few and far between at Latham, except a few of the ranchmen who came quite often to the post-office for their mail, I being deputy Nasby at that office and having charge of everything connected with postal matters.

In a radius of ten miles from Latham there were less than that number of ranchmen; but, in a number of respects, the station was looked upon as a very important point. It was a storehouse for grain, soap, candles and "dope" for the stage company. There it was that the stage teams forded the South Platte on their way to and from Salt Lake and California, and there it was that the mail-pouches for the Pacific slope were taken off the stages, immediately on their arrival, and examined, reloaded and rechecked for their destination.

It was only a few miles from Latham to where is now the county-seat of Weld county, the wide-awake city of Greeley. But at that early day—1864—Greeley was not dreamed of. The first building in that town—named for the New York *Tribune* founder—was erected in the spring of 1870. In fact, there was not a town containing a score of houses on the line between Atchison and Denver after leaving Marysville in Kansas, on the Big Blue river, 100 miles west of the Missouri.

During the latter part of 1863 and early in 1864, fabulous gold discoveries were reported at Bannock, in Montana, and shortly afterward there was an immense rush from all parts of the country to the promised new El Dorado. The overland stages during the "fever" did an immense business in transporting the anxious gold seekers. The rush and excitement were only equaled by the discoveries made in California during the period of the gold fever in 1849 and the Pike's Peak discoveries a decade later.

While the mad rush to Bannock was at its height, in the summer of 1864, a goodly portion of the great overland travel to that Northwest camp went through by private conveyance. It came up the valley and crossed the South Platte at Latham, It was during that spring or the summer previous that "honest" Benj. H. Eaton, afterwards governor of Colorado, crossed the Platte, and located his ranch near where Greeley now is, the immediate surroundings having since become a real garden spot.

There had been little difficulty in the stage teams fording the river at Latham until the great flood in Cherry creek, which occurred on the night of the 20th of May, 1864. At that time the flood, which came with hardly any warning, swept away, almost in an instant, the *Rocky Mountain News* office and a score or more of other buildings in Denver, resulting in the destruction of a large amount of property and considerable loss of life. This flood caused the Platte to rise at Latham so it was nearly bank full on the afternoon of the 21st. The next morning it was several feet higher, and out of its banks. It was a very severe and trying task to get the mail for Salt Lake, Nevada and California across the mighty river.

During that terrible flood the water rose rapidly for two days, but no one imagined the result. I had the mail rowed across the river in a skiff, taking personal charge, and landing it on high, dry ground on the opposite shore. I then waited for the eastbound stage, which was on the way here from the next station, a few miles west, it being impossible to ford at Latham during the unprecedented high water.

The large amount of mail necessitated making two trips across with it, but imagine my predicament when I made the discovery that I was entirely surrounded by water, which was still rapidly rising. While waiting for the stage, the fellow that rowed me over had gone with the skiff back to the stage office, on the south side of the river. For my personal safety I felt unconcerned; my only thoughts were for the safety of the mail. There was great danger that it might get wet from the rapid rising of the river, and this, for the time being, caused me no little uneasiness.

Piling up the mail pouches one on top of another on the highest and dryest spot of ground remaining—all told, only a few feet square—I waited patiently for the east-bound stage, then due from California. The minutes seemed like hours and I was getting more anxious. In due time the long-looked-for stage came as near as the driver cared to venture, but it was impossible for him to get nearer than within about 100 yards. It developed that I was to have an unpleasant personal trial in the art of navigation, for I had to pack each individual mail-pouch on my shoulders to the stage, wading waist deep in the cold water.

After this experiment, and for several days, until the flood subsided, the skiff was used to row the mail all the way to the stage-coach. I promptly reported the facts to the post-office department, adding that I was "getting along swimmingly." It must not be inferred that I was an amphibious biped, for, in consequence of this trying experience, I contracted a severe cold and cough, from which I suffered a long time, but still was able to attend to my duties in connection with the overland mail.

The water was at its highest stage on Friday, the 27th, when it came within two or three rods of the station. A rise of two feet more and the water would have come into my office. The bed of the river, which ordinarily was only a few rods wide at the ford, had now spread out until it was more than a mile wide, and the surrounding country, north, east, and west, looked like an inland sea. The water rose until it was from ten to fifteen feet in depth, carrying down houses, barns, stables, bridges, stock, pig-pens, chicken-coops, etc. During the great flood—the like of which had never before been witnessed by the oldest inhabitant or by any of the Indians—it was no easy matter to get a quarter to half a ton of mail across the river in a skiff, where it would be put on board the stage for the Pacific coast. There was fully double the amount of mail matter going west to California and intermediate points than was coming east. Going direct to Denver, without crossing the river, there was from 350 to 500 pounds daily, while the amount coming from Denver did not exceed an average of 150 pounds a day.

Dave McCutcheon, a wide-awake, rustling driver, for some time employed along the Cache la Poudre between Latham and the base of the mountains, seeing an opportunity to make some extra money during those stirring times in consequence of the flood, improvised a sort of combination skiff and flat-boat, and for a short time ran a temporary ferry across the south fork at Latham station. He hired some of the boys at the station to do extra driving for him, and, while the high water contined, made as much as twenty-five dollars a day rowing parties across the South Platte, just below the mouth of the Cache la Poudre.

The immense rush of people up the Platte in the direction of the Cache la Poudre and westerly over the Cherokee trail was owing to the new gold discoveries at Bannock. A great many had come up the Platte river to Latham because the crowd waiting to cross at old Julesburg—140 miles below—was so great it was impossible for the ferryman there to accommodate all. Of course this was a bonanza that did not last a great while, but McCutcheon made it pay him handsomely while the rush of gold seekers for the Northwest continued and the flood lasted. He would take wagons successfully across, but it would be necessary to take the vehicles apart in order to get them over on his boat. The teams had to swim across.

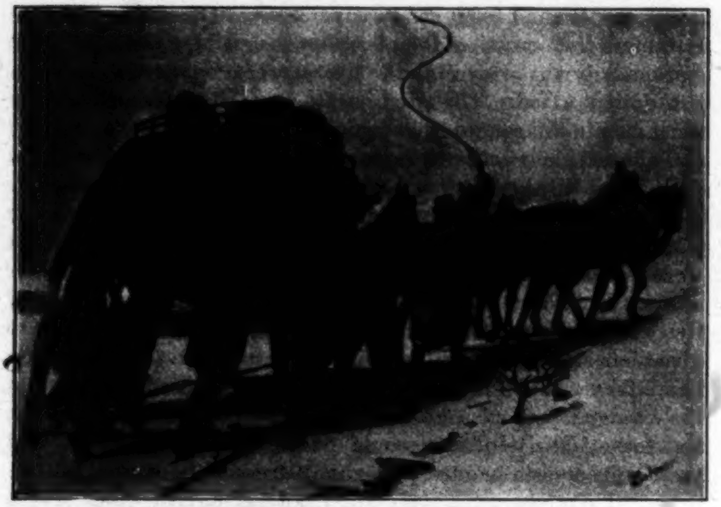
But Dave McCutcheon was equal to all emergencies. He was a large, powerfully built young man, and seemingly as strong as an ox. He could consume considerable whisky, and he could also do a great amount of heavy work when necessity required. Besides, he was an amateur pugilist, and he had a hide in toughness only exceeded by the rhinoceros. Some of the stage boys at the station who thought they understood the science of pugilism used to try and stand up before him, but in nine cases out of ten he could come pretty near knocking them out in the first round. I know this to be true, for I once put on the gloves and stood up before Dave. It was only for a second or two, for I was knocked off my feet with a bloody nose almost as quick as a wink, to the amusement of the boys who were looking on. I asked McCutcheon one day if there was anything on the "Overland" that could knock him out. He said: "There is nothing on the stage line that I cannot stand up to, unless it be the 'forty-rod poison,' sold under the name of whisky at an adjoining ranch. Some of that," he continued, "would knock the devil himself out, if he merely smelled of the vile stuff."

The winter of 1863–'64 was a cold and very severe one, exceedingly disastrous to stock on the upper South Platte. Hay along that stream was scarce, and, on account of the immense traffic, the demand for it steadily increased. The large number of freighters then crossing the plains made business at the ranches extremely brisk. Hay in the Denver market advanced to seventy-five dollars a ton. The price was a great temptation to many ranchmen in the valleys, who disposed of the most of their supply and allowed their cattle to graze on the range, which was covered with snow, till they were reduced to mere walking skeletons.

Quite a number of ranchmen who had sold their hay to the stage company before the great advance in the price of the article would, under cover of night, steal a portion of it to supply their needs. Freighters and pilgrims *en route* to Denver scores of times tried to buy, borrow or beg of the company enough hay to give their stock a single feed, but, owing to the limited supply on hand, they would invariably be refused. It was necessary that the overland mail be kept moving, and to do this required hay, and lots of it. Holladay would rather buy hay than sell, and there appeared to be none in sight that could be bought at any price. Therefore, some who could not get hay by other means would, as a last resort, under cover of darkness, steal it.

In the latter part of February, 1864, several attempts were made to bribe the stage company's stock tender at Latham station. Frequently he would be offered by freighters and pilgrims as high as ten dollars for enough hay to feed a four-horse team a single night, but he was honest and faithful to the trusts imposed in him and invariably declined the tempting offers. Armstrong was the name of the faithful stock tender. No doubt thousands of dollars' worth of hay and grain were stolen from the stage proprietor during that severe winter, yet the traffic on the Platte was so great and feed so scarce that many horses and cattle died of starvation.

The weather during the 1st and 2d days of June, 1864, as I remember, was remarkably cold; a long rain, followed by sleet, making it very disagreeable in the upper South Platte valley. It was so cold at Latham we were obliged to have fires all day and to be dressed with heavy winter clothing. Considerable snow had fallen on the continental divide, which was plainly in view from the station, though fifty to seventy-five miles away; the fresh, silvery-white mantle adding much to the beauty of the scene. The snow on the mountains was visible west, northwest and southwest for a long distance, completely covering the summit,



Pushing stage up an icy hill. ***Page 318.***

and presenting a charming panorama north and south of Long's Peak which could be seen for more than 100 miles.

I shall never forget the weather experienced while spending my first winter in Colorado, at Latham station, in 1863–'64. Much of the time the atmosphere, while cool and crisp, was perfectly clear, the sun shining beautifully, enabling one to have a view of the summit of the Rockies for a stretch of over 150 miles. For days at a time apparently not a breath of air was stirring. The altitude at Latham was something over 4000 feet above sea-level. To the west, northwest and southwest all the mountain peaks were covered with snow, presenting a scene as charming and lovely as could be imagined. This kind of weather, however, did not always continue. Several times there were furious blizzards, which irresistibly swept down from the mountains, lasting hours—sometimes days at a time—before there would be any let-up. Often considerable damage resulted, not only to the stage company but to people engaged in overland freighting. Neighboring ranchmen, whose stock grazed summer and winter on the range, suffered heavily, the animals having a difficult time picking a scanty living through the snow, which covered the ground in every direction as far as the eye could reach.

While spending a part of four seasons at Latham, a number of times during the dry weather in midsummer I was delighted while watching, some thirty-five or forty miles away, in the foothills to the west, a terrific rain-storm accompanied with flashes of forked lightning, soon followed by rumbling echoes of peals of distant thunder. Beyond, but a considerable distance above the rain-storm—way up among the scattered towering peaks and along the summit of the "Great Divide"—the scene as viewed from Latham was grand and beautiful. It was a rich treat to gaze upon, at the same time a fearful snow-storm in progress along the backbone of the continent. In reality, the storm was a miniature blizzard, raging in all its fury, and extending more than 14,000 feet above sea-level, far above the terrific thunderstorm. Thus, while at Latham the weather would be delightful and balmy, as lovely as could be wished for—the atmosphere as clear as any Italian sky—it seemed remarkably singular that, in a limited space, not exceeding forty miles distant, the eye could take in, all at one and the same time, such a variety of weather. It was hard for me to realize, while in the valley, basking in the sunshine and the most lovely weather imaginable, that in midsummer, a mile and a half or two miles above us, on Long's Peak and the Snowy Range, could be plainly seen a blizzard lasting several hours, and after the storm would subside and the clouds break away the appearance of the "Great Divide" would be changed, and covered with a beautiful white mantle. All together it was a scene new to me, and it appeared that no other region in the world except Colorado could furnish its equal.

One day during the summer of 1864 the stage had arrived at Latham from California a little before noon, having a load of through passengers who ordered dinner. The substantial meal prepared having been partaken of with a relish, all but one promptly paid their bills. This one fellow, who was adorned with long hair and flowing beard, jumped into the Concord as it was ready to roll out for Atchison, whereupon McIlvain, the good-natured station keeper, advanced to the vehicle and gently reminded the passenger that he had evidently forgotten to liquidate.

"What!" said the astonished, long-haired passenger; "you don't intend to charge Jesus Christ anything, do you?"

At this remark Mac was almost paralyzed. He stood for a few seconds as motionless as a statue and fastened his keen, piercing eyes upon the noted individual. Being a strong infidel, Mac was not acquainted with any one bearing that name. In a moment he inquired:

"Are you that important personage?" and receiving an answer in the affirmative, without even a smile he said: "Well, sir, if you are Jesus Christ, you can have your dinner free," and looking at the waybill he saw there was no mistake—the person's name was so entered at Placerville as one of the through passengers for Atchison. The important name he had chosen did not pass him over the stage line, for he had paid full fare.

The fellow was rather a seedy-looking individual, and the opinion I formed of him at the time has never been changed; it was that he was a first-class fraud, and had taken the name of the Savior in order to dead-beat his meals across the country on the overland stage line, at the expense of the station keepers.

The summer of 1864 will long remain fresh in the minds of every one then living along the Little Blue and Platte rivers. During that memorable season the Indians began their depredations on the overland line in the Blue valley below Fort Kearney, and word reached us at Latham, *via* Denver, on the 10th of August, that stages were no longer running out of Atchison, and probably would not be for some weeks to come. Between Denver and Latham and Latham and Placerville, however, there was no trouble, and the coaches continued to arrive and depart between those stations daily.

The *Rocky Mountain News*—quite a metropolitan journal—the only daily paper then published in Denver (Byers & Dailey, proprietors), gave us the telegraphic news quite regularly, and kept us posted for a time, as best it could, concerning the depredations almost daily being committed by the Indians along the line down the Platte. The last stage to bring us a mail from the East arrived at three o'clock on the morning of the 15th of August, having already been due five days.

The arrival daily of east-bound passengers from the Pacific slope and coast continued, until between fifty and seventy-five were at the station-house. It was a difficult matter at first to find sleeping places for such a crowd. The station was not prepared to furnish anything but meals. Nearly all the passengers, however, had blankets—no passenger overland by stage thought of traveling without blankets—and it was nothing unusual to see fifteen or twenty men, representing the banker, merchant, lawyer, preacher, doctor, professor, mechanic, and miner, snoozing on the floor in a single room. In some cases they were packed almost as close as sardines, and when the order was given to "turn over" it was necessary for all to move in concert. At least twenty-five of the passengers who were used to "roughing it" chose to sleep at the barn, in the hay-loft, in preference to even a luxurious feather bed or spring mattress, had there been any such modern comforts at the station-house. They got along very well under the circumstances, and all having seen life in the West, there were comparatively few complaints.

Nearly all the delayed passengers at the station were a jolly, good-natured lot of fellows. The most of them were more or less used to the plains and life on the frontier, and without the least grumbling could put up with inconveniences. They were obliged to put up with them. The long days and weeks of anxious suspense during that memorable season passed away with comparatively little complaint on the part of any who were so unfortunate as to be caught there during the embargo caused by the Indian outbreak. Every one about the premises believed that at Latham station they were comparatively safe and each tried to be as cheerful as possible under the circumstances. There was little hope just then of the passengers being able to get away or to resume their journey eastward by stage. Excitement was apparent, for no one knew but that inside of twenty-four hours it might be a "battle for life" with every one at the station. When the embargo would be lifted no one could conjecture. Every one appeared thankful, however, that he had a shelter and was where the necessaries of life could be obtained.

Wild rumors of Indian depredations continued to reach us almost daily—sometimes the reports were so thick that they came every few hours—recounting the brutalities being committed by the hostiles down the Platte east of Latham. Some of the stories told almost made the blood run cold. From the best information to be gathered, there were hostiles north, south and east of us, but the route between Latham and Denver was open, and the overland stages between these two points, and also the line to Salt Lake and beyond, ran daily without interruption. I never before experienced such feelings, and trust I never shall again.

One of the rumors—by the way, one of the most exciting ones

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AN EXPERIENCE AT LATHAM IN 1864. *Page 355.*

—reached us on the 20th of August, two weeks after the outbreak, that a force of 900 Indians were on the road, coming up the South Platte, cleaning out everything along the route, and that a portion of them were marching on Latham. No one could tell whence the rumor came; still, under, the excitement, there was no one who dared to doubt it. When this report reached Latham I was spending a day or two at Laporte, fishing in the Cache la Poudre and visiting friends. When the report reached me, if it be a fact, I reasoned to myself, powder and lead will be in demand. It was Sunday morning, August 21. I at once repaired to the only store in the place and bought a keg of powder and all the shot and lead I could find, together with a couple of shot-guns, and took the first east-bound stage to Latham, the driver making an extra-fast run, and arrived at noon. I resembled a "walking arsenal" as I got down from the box with revolver, rifle, shot-guns, powder, shot, and lead. I found the whole country for a radius of ten or fifteen miles, notwithstanding it was sparsely settled, had been thoroughly aroused by the ugly rumor, and nearly all the ranchmen, with their families, had gathered at the station for protection against the prowling, bloodthirsty savages. The ladies had made a flag and it floated over the station. All together, there were fully 150 persons collected, including the stage passengers who were waiting there, unable to go on their journey east. With such rumors in circulation, it is no wonder that the excitement at Latham was at fever heat.

In order to be prepared for any emergency, the ranchmen and stage passengers, to protect themselves and the station, organized at once into a sort of military company. Capt. Joseph La Barge, an old Missouri river steamboat man, of St. Louis, who was returning from the Montana gold-mines by stage, was unanimously chosen to take command of the forces. All the ranchmen had brought with them their arms; some had rifles, some shot-guns, while nearly every one had a revolver or pistol of some kind. My office was with the station keeper and agent, in a small room in the southeast corner of the building, and the guns all stored there gave the room the appearance of an arsenal.

The mails from California and the West daily accumulated, until there were 109 sacks—weighing two or three tons—and these were piled up to the ceiling around the room for breastworks. I knew that no rifle ball could go through the log building and felt perfectly satisfied that, should one happen to go through the chinking, it would be impossible to penetrate the many mail-sacks filled with letters. The room had an east and a south window, giving an unobstructed view for several miles. I felt little uneasiness in regard to the safety of the mail and was satisfied that, if an attack was made on the premises, I could, with my fortifications, two shot-guns, an improved breech-loading rifle, a brace of navy revolvers, and a keg of powder, "hold the fort." Around the station matters soon began to assume a sort of warlike appearance. The men were daily drilling, at intervals, preparing to make, if need be, a formidable resistance. Some half a dozen were detailed each night for guard duty at different points outside, to watch for the approach of the savages. This business was kept up for several nights in succession, a new guard being selected for service each night.

While the occupation of standing guard continued, it was my lot to be detailed, with about a half-dozen others, one night. I chose my own spot, something like 150 yards outside, directly south and in front of my office. It was a cool, frosty night, and, after pacing back and forth a couple of hours, I concluded that a little sleep would be more conducive to good health and comfort than the exercise; so I slipped around to the barn, got a big armful of hay, and carried it to the spot which I had selected for standing guard. I wanted to make it warm for myself, if not for the Indians; so I took out my buffalo robe for a covering. There was part of a large, forked cottonwood tree, between two and three feet in diameter, lying on the ground, into the forks of which I put the hay and lay down for a snooze.

I had my rifle by my side and a navy revolver in my belt. All the time I had somehow felt a sort of instinct that some of the boys—to use a vulgar expression—intended to "play roots on me"; so I lay there for a while with one eye open. I was more certain that a trick was to be played on me than I was that we should be molested by Indians; hence felt quite safe so far as getting a call from the latter was concerned. I had a glorious sleep during the night, and when I awoke, after the sun was up, sure enough I then made the discovery that my rifle was gone.

I went to the station for breakfast, but said nothing concerning my loss. While eating, the boys wanted to know of each other how they had spent the night while on guard. One after the other told his experience during the long hours of night. In due time I was called upon to give my experience and related to the faithful guards my hairbreadth escape (?). With a "smile that was childlike and bland," but with considerable solemnity, I assured the crowd I had actually met the enemy and had had a terrible battle with the savages; that while, in the fierce but bloodless engagement that had ensued, the redskins, in overpowering numbers, succeeded in capturing my rifle, I was very thankful that they had left my scalp. All seated at the table joined in a hearty laugh. Supposing I had been sleeping with one eye open, and knew all the facts connected with the trick they thought so shrewdly played on me during the night, it is hardly necessary to say my rifle was soon forthcoming.

Time passed on. Down the Platte in the vicinity of Plum Creek and Fort Kearney the excitement was intense and kept increasing. There was no telling what a day might bring forth. The difficulty in obtaining reliable news of the situation where most of the depredations had been committed was very great. Often we would hear a score or more of rumors in a day regarding matters hundreds of miles east down the Platte valley. Keeping a standing guard was continued several nights in succession, but still no signs of the enemy.

After the excitement, which at intervals had for days and weeks been at fever heat, and while regular guard duty was still being kept up at night, every one about the house was suddenly aroused between eleven and twelve o'clock at night by one of the guards, Mr. B. F. Houx, a freighter who had been stopping there some time (and whose wife was visiting Mrs. McIlvain, they having long been acquaintances and friends in northern Missouri). Mr. Houx was terribly frightened, and as he communicated the information to me in my bunk he was trembling like a leaf and appeared very much excited. He assured every one about the premises that the Indians were coming, and could then be distinctly heard fording the South Platte, only a few hundred yards north of the station. The night was clear but quite dark, and the splashing of water in the river could be distinctly heard, as he had reported.

Every person in the house was soon up and dressed. Extra skirmishers were promptly deployed. The "enemy" was soon discovered, and proved to be nothing else than a drove of cattle crossing the river. In the meantime every one who had a gun or revolver had grasped it, or had it so he could put his hand on it at a moment's warning. However, nearly all appeared a little disgusted to think they had been so completely sold; still many of them were greatly pleased that they were thus disappointed in what had been promising a lively skirmish or battle with the Indians. One man declared that he had rather fight cattle than savages. There was at once a general throwing down of arms. The monotony and excitement of the past few weeks was suddenly broken, and each succeeding day began to strengthen the belief of all who were waiting at the station that the route between Latham and Atchison would soon be opened by the military, and stage travel and ox and mule traffic be resumed.

On Sunday, the 28th of August, I climbed on the box of the stage-coach with the driver at Latham and went to Denver. My object was to confer with the postmaster and stage authorities there, and to learn all I could of the Indian situation, and of the probabilities of reopening the great stage line from Latham to the Missouri river. I observed that nearly every ranch along the road had been deserted, and the appearance was gloomy enough. The stage stations between Latham and Denver — Big Bend, Fort. Lupton, and Pierson's — however, were not vacated. The keepers still stuck to their posts. But no one could tell when the line east would likely be opened.

For hundreds of miles down the Platte east of Latham the Indians were bold and defiant, and apparently ran matters to suit themselves. They had in many instances run off the stage stock, burned the company's buildings, destroyed hay and supplies, and a number of emigrants had been horribly murdered, scalped, and left by the wayside. The freighters, however, were seldom disturbed. They had learned to concentrate and moved across the plains in large bodies. Usually they were armed with such effective weapons that they could offer, if need be, a vigorous defense. But all freighting in the meantime had ceased and traffic over the plains had been abandoned. It was only at intervals that a stranger on the road would be seen. To be sure, there were hundreds of teams on the overland route loaded for Denver and other Colorado points, but they had corraled in large bodies down the Platte, deeming it imprudent to try to make the trip so long as the stages carrying the great overland mail had ceased to run.

As might be expected, since traffic had stopped, it was not long until nearly all kinds of provisions began to get scarce throughout Colorado. Flour jumped from nine dollars to sixteen and subsequently bounded to twenty-four dollars per hundred pounds. Where a hundred teams a day had been passing Latham station for weeks, during the trouble and excitement, hardly a team was now to be seen. In some respects it was the most lonely and trying month I ever experienced. Precaution was taken by Mr. McIlvain, the station keeper, to lay in an ample supply of flour, ham, bacon, potatoes, dried fruit, sugar, coffee and other eatables at the beginning of the troubles, and, by his foresight, he saved for himself several hundred dollars, and his guests were well cared for. Latham was the best eating-house between Fort Kearney and Salt Lake City.

Before the Indian troubles that summer, passengers who came from the west by stage informed us that the grasshoppers were coming—making their way eastward—and that very likely we would in a few days be visited by them. Sure enough, in a day or two the advance-guard reached us; they were the genuine red-legged locusts. A day later, like an avalanche, they came down, myriads of them, and devoured nearly every blade of grass, shrub, and weed. They ate every leaf from the few cottonwood trees, leaving them as denuded as in midwinter. Every green bush was stripped of its foliage. The ranchmen in the valley lost nearly all they had in the shape of grain and garden vegetables. It was a terrible scourge, and reminded one of the plagues sent by the Almighty upon the Egyptians in the time of Moses. The 'hoppers came in such countless millions that at times the sun was darkened as they flew past. The air at times seemed full of them, and could be likened only to a snow-storm, with the largest flakes sifting down as they passed over us for several days. The ground, where vast numbers had alighted and were mowing down the grass and weeds, was perfectly brown with them. As one walked along the ravenous insects hopped right and left to keep from being stepped upon. I never before saw such a sight, but have twice since witnessed scenes closely resembling it in Kansas; the first one in 1867, the second in the '70's.

While the exciting campaign along the Platte continued, there was a rumor that suggested to every one about the station who had arms to get them in readiness, prepared, if necessary, for immediate action. In my office, under the table, I had stored for any emergency a keg of powder. Loading my six-shooter, I capped it, being careful to try every chamber, to see if they were in proper condition for service. While cocking the gun to see that the trigger and hammer both worked satisfactorily, by some means I never was able to explain, the gun was accidentally discharged. The ball entered the table directly in front of which I was standing.

Making a search, I discovered that it had gone down through the table and into the drawer, among some private papers. I pulled out the drawer, and discovered that the bullet had gone through it, papers and all. I continued the search, when, behold! I found that it had gone down into the keg of powder that stood under the table! The hair on my head seemed to stand out like bristles, and great drops of cold sweat poured off my brow. Never before had such feelings come over me, and I trust they may never come again. It was some seconds before I could speak, and those in the room said I was as white as a sheet. After that exciting experience, I was extremely cautious that a similar event should not occur.

It is a notorious fact that many of the overland stage drivers and stock tenders, between three and four decades ago, were inhabited by a species of vermin known as *pediculus vestimenti*, but on the plains more vulgarly called "graybacks." Some of the boys at times were fairly alive with them. It is not at all surprising, however, for they slept from year to year on ticks filled with hay—they called it "prairie feathers"—and their blankets were seldom washed from one year's end to another. Some of the stage company's employees did n't indulge in a bath for several months at a time, especially during the winter season, when the weather was way down below the freezing-point and even the most plain and simple conveniences for a bath were greatly lacking.

While living at Latham that summer during the civil war, an excellent opportunity was from time to time afforded me to become familiar with a few things I had never before dreamed of. The boys employed on the stage line, I soon learned, had a way of disposing of the graybacks when they became so numerous that it was a serious question as to who should remain master of the situation. Not more than 300 yards to the south of the station were quite a number of uncommonly large ant-hills or mounds,

Preliminaries to wash-day. *Page 340.*

of circular form. They were at least six inches high, and some of them were fully six or eight feet across. The mounds appeared in shape very much like a pressed-tin milk-pan, bottom side up. The soil was mostly coarse sand and gravel, which the ants had thrown up into their nicely built mounds. The surrounding vegetation consisted of a luxuriant growth of cacti and scanty tufts of bunch- or buffalo-grass. The ants themselves, in size, were from one-fourth to three-fourths of an inch in length. Some of them could nearly always be seen reconnoitering outside the hills—probably deployed as skirmishers—but they lived inside. In color they were a dark brown.

Having a curiosity to learn something about the inside of their abiding place one day, I repaired to one of their "villages," and with a strong stick thoroughly demolished one of the largest and best constructed of the mounds. I was aware that the inside premises had some ants, but in a few seconds I was surprised—completely horrified—to find the place covered with apparently millions of the busy insects, which were for the time evidently bewildered, and for a while there appeared to be a sort of pandemonium reigning among them. They continued to boil up out of the ground in great numbers and moved about the premises in every direction, doubtless pondering on the ruins. I could not help but feel sorry for what I had done in destroying their home. Finally the vast army of insects got down to business, and from that time did lively work rebuilding that which I had thoughtlessly destroyed to obtain a little information.

During the hot weather of midsummer, when the vermin were rapidly multiplying, it was the custom of the boys at the station to take their underclothing and blankets in the morning, spread them out on the ant-hills, and get them late in the afternoon, minus the last grayback. This was the way they did their washing. They found it an excellent substitute for making the music of a John Chinaman on the wash-board. For a time, at least, after the "washing days," they could enjoy some rest. But in a few weeks it would become necessary to repeat the operation of a general clean-out by placing their garments and blankets at the disposal of the ants. Nearly every stage-driver, stock tender, and bull-whacker along the South Platte infested with this kind of vermin, during the days of overland staging and freighting, well remembers the valuable services of these ants. Mammoth ant-hills, upward of a third of a century ago, were common in the South Platte valley in sight of the Rockies.

While the excitement was still running high, and when it was feared there would be an Indian raid at Latham any hour, Captain Morgan, of the Colorado "100-days-ers," came down with his company from Denver, on Sunday, September 18, bringing a battery of several guns with him. The company at once went into camp, and pitched their tents a few hundred rods west of the station. This move gave all who had assembled at the station an opportunity to breathe a little easier. Most of the ranchmen, with their families, who had come to the place for safety, returned to their homes and resumed work. Matters immediately began to look brighter. In six days after Captain Morgan's arrival — Saturday, September 24 — the arrival at Latham of a stage from Denver at five P. M., destined for Atchison, announced that the blockade on the Platte had been raised.

This welcome news appeared to be the signal for a general rejoicing by all in the vicinity. They now could, after a period of six weeks, have the glorious privilege of once more communicating with loved ones and friends in the East. There were shouts of joy by the seventy-five passengers, some of whom had been waiting anxiously for weeks. All present joined in the demonstration, and cheer after cheer went up from the multitude. During the embargo an enormous amount of mail had accumulated. I dispatched, on the first east-bound stage that evening, forty-one sacks of mail matter, nearly a ton in weight, filling the whole inside of the coach and both the front and hind boots. I continued sending daily from the balance of it by each stage that departed down the Platte until it was soon all dispatched, giving the accumulated mail matter precedence over passengers. There was some kicking by the passengers who had been waiting so long, but there was no alternative. The mail must go at all hazards. In a few days all the mail from the Pacific had gone on its way east, and every one was apparently happy.

The first mail to arrive at Latham from the east since the 15th of August came up on the 28th day of September. The occasion was one of rejoicing by every one about the premises and by the ranchmen in the vicinity. We had been waiting over six weeks for this mail. I can never forget how well pleased the people felt on the arrival of that long-looked-for first stage from the east. To most of them it seemed almost like being brought from darkness to light. The mail, to be sure, was due six weeks before; letters and papers having been lying all this time at Fort Kearney, because stages were unable to go east or west of that point.

During the latter part of August and most of September, owing to the scarcity of food throughout Colorado, the situation looked critical in the extreme. For six weeks there had been no communication by mail with the East. All travel by the overland stage had been cut off by the savages. No coaches ran along the Platte between Latham and Fort Kearney, a distance of 340 miles. A portion of the time all traffic was suspended from Fort Kearney east down the Little Blue for nearly 100 miles. The Indians were masters of the situation and virtually held undisputed possession of the line for fully 350 miles. Nearly all the stations were burned, and the torch was applied to the stage company's supply of hay and grain. The red devils likewise burnt a number of coaches, ran off a portion of the stage stock, and, at old Julesburg alone, it is said property to the amount of over $100,000 belonging to the stage proprietor was destroyed by them.

While that critical period lasted, nearly every ranch along the

Platte for hundreds of miles was vacated, owing to the horrible butcheries by the Indians. A dozen or more persons were killed and scalped at Plum Creek. Scores of families of ranchmen abandoned their homes and everything they possessed on the plains and, nearly frightened to death, joined those fleeing east for their lives. Everything they had, except what was hastily packed and taken along, was left to the mercy of the infuriated savages, who, after appropriating what they could easily get away with, applied the torch, and what remained was reduced to ashes. Of the stage property destroyed along the Platte at the various other stations, the amount was estimated at the time from $50,000 to $100,000.

The Government was very slow in making a move. After it had finally decided to reopen the overland route and give protection to the stage company transporting the mails, soldiers were stationed along the Platte for more than 300 miles at intervals of a few miles. A mounted escort of six to ten cavalrymen accompanied each coach east and west. Beside Captain Morgan's company of Colorado cavalry with a battery temporarily stationed at Latham, there was one company at Camp Collins, twenty-five miles west of Latham; one on Bijou creek, some thirty-five or forty miles east; and one at Valley Station, on the South Platte, forty miles west of old Julesburg.

A short distance above Julesburg a fort was built of sod, and christened "Fort Sedgwick." It was quite an important point in its day, being a depot of Government supplies for fully 150 miles along the South Platte. A mile or two east of Cottonwood Springs—midway between Fort Kearney and old Julesburg—was Fort Cottonwood; and on one of my last trips east by stage from Denver in charge of a half-ton of mail, we were escorted for some distance by different squads detailed from the Seventh Iowa Cavalry, several companies of which regiment were camped at convenient points along the route.

During all the excitement occasioned by the Indian troubles on the plains, through that memorable season of 1864, it is a notable fact that the telegraph line was seldom molested by the savages. Somebody, it would appear, had taught them that the wire stretching from pole to pole across the plains ran direct to the White House, and belonged exclusively to the "Great Father" at Washington. By many of them it was regarded as something sacred. The wire, to be sure, was often down—sometimes for days at a time—but it was almost invariably thrown down by wind-storms, of which there was some very severe ones along the highway that traversed the Platte and crossed the western part of the continent over three rugged mountain ranges.

While the overland line was in operation, there was a fellow known as "Rocky" Thomas, keeping a company station along the eastern slope of the Rockies. Thomas, during his younger days, was "one of the boys," and in later years, when he chanced to be on hand where a number of the "knights of the lash" were congregated, he never failed to entertain them. As a story-teller he was a success, and he could keep his listeners most of the time in a roar of laughter. A good joke finally leaked out on Rocky, while he stopped a few hours at Latham one day, that he did not tell himself.

It was in the summer of 1864, at Latham, that I heard this one told at his expense. He had some time before been for a year or two connected with the regular army, previous to the civil war. At the time this happened he was garrisoned on the frontier. It was during a spell of some of the coldest weather ever experienced on the plains, even by the oldest inhabitants. The mercury went so low that a mule belonging to the Government actually froze to death one night. The dead animal was discovered by Rocky in the corral, and he reported the fact in the morning to a superior officer, as follows:

"One of the mules in the corral died last night."

"Well, drag it out," was the order given to Rocky, and forthwith he performed the task assigned him. Rocky was a shrewd fellow, holding the subordinate position of sergeant, and he thought he could see something ahead that promised to pay him handsomely, inasmuch as there was no early prospect of the weather getting any warmer for some time to come. Under the cover of darkness, at a late hour, Rocky dragged the dead, frozen mule back into the corral, at the same time running off a live mule, and the following morning appeared before his superior officer and reported:

"Another mule died in the corral last night."

"Drag it out," was the order again given, and Sergeant Thomas at once performed the duty.

The following night Rocky appeared again in the corral, ran off a fresh mule, and in its place dragged the dead mule back into the corral, and in the morning reported as before:

"Another mule died last night."

The order was given as before, to "drag it out," and the faithful sergeant promptly performed the task, having in the meantime got away with another live mule. By this time Rocky had discovered that he was getting in shape for doing a big business, and he thought he could see a small fortune in the distance, provided the live mules held out and the cold weather continued long enough. He reasoned to himself, "This is the way I long have sought." He was highly elated over his new occupation, for every mule he could run off was big money to him. But the superior officer, by this time, was beginning to get his eyes open. He began to think there was "something rotten in Denmark." He could n't understand Rocky's new game. The dead-mule dodge, he thought, was becoming somewhat monotonous, and he concluded to keep an eye open and learn something.

During his whole life, he reasoned to himself, he had never before heard of a mule dying a natural death, and he was determined, in his advancing years, to learn something more of the "ways that are dark and tricks that are vain" regarding the innocent Government mule. Wrapping himself up to withstand the freezing weather, he secreted himself near by, and at a late hour the wide-awake sergeant quietly appeared on the premises. Having run off another fresh mule he soon returned, and began the somewhat monotonous task of again dragging into the corral the same dead mule he had in the morning dragged out. The officer kept quiet and watched the proceedings with decided interest; then he arose and said: "A motion to adjourn is always in order. I move, Sergeant Thomas, that you get a fresh mule and not wear out that poor, dead animal by dragging it back and forth so much."

This unexpected visit almost paralyzed Rocky, and for a moment he stood speechless. He could not even "put the motion." He saw at once that he was caught, and realized that his new scheme of money-making in a way that his superior "did not understand" had suddenly come to an end. What to do he did n't know. He felt like shooting himself, but did n't. He expected to be severely punished, but nothing was ever said to him.

The officer, however, thought it was one of the richest things he had ever heard of in army life, and, while he never mentioned the matter to Rocky, who was somewhat mortified, he afterward told a few of his old friends about the good joke that had been played on him, and that is the way the facts in the case were brought to light. The officer said he had to tell it—it was something "too good to keep."

In the spring of 1864, I met at Latham station a queer genius and talked several hours with him. The name that this gentleman went by was "Commodore" Stephen Decatur. I did not talk long with him until I learned, from his remarks, that he was born in Sussex county, New Jersey. Being an Eastern man myself—a New Yorker by birth—he was free to talk with me and seemed glad of the opportunity. I soon observed that he was a man of remarkable conversational powers and that he was possessed of a fund of valuable information. I also learned from his own lips that his elder brother was Lieutenant-governor Bross, of Illinois, whom many will remember as at one time the managing editor of the Chicago *Tribune*.

The "commodore" lived for many years in his native state, where he taught school, but one day in the '40's he told his wife he had to go to New York, and he left his home, and was not heard from again. Subsequently he drifted out West but dropped the name of Bross. While on the frontier he enlisted in General Doniphan's regiment, and seemed proud of the fact that he was one of the men who made the famous march under Kearny to Santa Fé and Chihuahua. Later he settled on the banks of the mighty Missouri and for several years ran a ferry between Council Bluffs and Omaha. He was approached one day by his brother, who recognized him, but he denied his identity absolutely.

In 1859, with the throng of sturdy pioneers who, because of the gold discoveries on the eastern slope of the Rockies, made their way from the Missouri river to the mountains, he went to Colorado, where he lived and where he finally died. From the time he went there his manner of life was well known to all the pioneer citizens of the Centennial state. During the civil war he early enlisted as a member of the Third Colorado Regiment, and participated, under the gallant Colonel Chivington, in the memorable fight at Sand Creek, in which engagement some 600 Indians were slain and the death of 174 whites between the Missouri river and the Rocky Mountains was avenged.

As a soldier the "commodore" was as brave as he was gallant.

LATHAM STATION DURING THE INDIAN EXCITEMENT. *Page 331.*

He was a conversationalist whom it was a pleasure to meet. He was widely and favorably known as a citizen, a forcible speaker, and a man of education, with most of the refined instincts of a gentleman. For a time he was editor of the Georgetown *Miner*, and, for a number of years he prospected about Georgetown, in Clear Creek county, and about Peru and Montezuma, in Summit county, and, in 1866–'68, represented that prosperous mining district in the Colorado territorial legislature. At the Philadelphia Centennial Exposition he ably represented his adopted state. During this time it is said he was recognized several times by his relatives, but always denied his identity. Delegations of citizens from his old home, it is alleged, called on him and established his identity by marks on his person, but he maintained his stolid denial.

He subsequently drifted off to some of the mining camps, and, on the 3d of June, 1888, died at Rosita, a small camp in the Sangre de Cristo mountains, at upwards of eighty years of age, and almost penniless. No one was ever able to account for his eccentric conduct.

While at Latham, in 1864, I made the acquaintance of Friday, an Indian chief belonging to a band of Arapahoes. At that time Friday appeared to be about forty-five or fifty years of age. His home was somewhere north of the South Platte, and his band was camping perhaps ten to fifteen miles from the stage station. Friday was a remarkably quiet and evidently an intelligent Indian. He could speak the English language so as to be quite easily understood. It appeared a great pleasure to him to spend an occasional day at the station, for the landlord always invited him to partake of a good dinner, and I never failed to pass the tobacco and cigars to him, and of these he appeared to be a great lover. He visited us at least half a dozen times during the year 1864, and appeared to be devotedly attached to us. We learned from him that years before, when a boy, he had gone to school at St. Louis, but his love for the plains and for his tribe made him return to his wild life.

In stature Friday was a man a little below the medium. I talked hours at a time with him at the station. Mr. McIlvain, the station keeper, showed him some gold nuggets, and inquired of him if he knew what they were and where such stuff could be found. He said he did; that it was gold; and that if he wanted to go after it he would take a dozen of his warriors and pilot us where it could be found in immense quantities. He said it would take about one moon—meaning a month—to go there, and that we would have to go through the country inhabited by the Utes before reaching the location of the precious yellow stuff. (The Utes and Arapahoes then were deadly enemies and crossing their lands meant a fight.)

Friday described the location as placer diggings of the richest kind; said the gold was in the stream, and that pieces of it from a quarter inch to one or two inches in length were plainly visible in places. The Indians, he said, cared nothing themselves for gold; silver, in half-dollar pieces, was the money for them. He intimated to us that we were the only white men he had ever told of the existence of the gold deposits, but he freely volunteered his services, and said he would make up a party of a dozen or more of his picked men and take us safely beyond the Snowy Range, where we could get all the gold we could pack across the mountains on a pony. He also told us that in six weeks he could take us where we could see little stones that "shine" in the night (meaning diamonds).

McIlvain became considerably excited and deeply interested over the stories of fabulous wealth told by the Indian, and even at that late time of the year (early in October) declared he would go on the long journey if I would make it with him. Much as I wanted to go on such an expedition, I had a previous engagement that I felt in duty bound to fulfil. I was engaged to be married at Atchison, Kan., the cards were already out, and less than three weeks would elapse ere the event was to take place. So our proposed expedition into a region hundreds of miles away, inhabited by a tribe of hostile Indians, was abandoned.

In two weeks thereafter the route of the overland stage line was changed from Latham to the cut-off, some twenty-five or thirty miles south of the Platte. The change threw Mr. McIlvain out of a job with the stage company, and he moved to Denver. I never afterward saw or heard from Friday, whom I regarded as one of the best and most trustworthy Indians I ever became acquainted with.

Land within a few miles—I might say almost within a stone's throw of where stands the beautiful city of Greeley—thirty-odd years ago was considered utterly worthless for agricultural purposes, except for raising wheat and oats and the most hardy vegetables, in the low bottoms. No one dreamed in 1864 that corn would grow in that locality, or that anything could be raised in the shape of fruit. Back from the river bottom the face of the country was covered with cacti, and the land—almost wholly coarse sand and gravel—was not considered to be worth five cents an acre, except for grazing purposes. Little or nothing was thought of irrigation in that vicinity in the early '60's. Except in the bottoms, the land was looked upon as a good-for-nothing region for the farmer.

The few scattering ranchmen living around Latham at that time little thought that a few years of patient toil, and getting water on the land, would make it "blossom as the rose," and become, what it now is, one of the most productive agricultural regions of the state. There is no part of Colorado—indeed, there is no section of the great West over which the mail and express stages to California ran in the early '60's—that has made more rapid advancement than Weld county. Especially has it been so with that portion naturally tributary to Greeley, only a few miles distant from what was known in overland staging days as Latham station.

From the location there of a mere handful of people comprising "Union Colony" in the spring of 1870, which was so favorably mentioned at the time by the New York *Tribune* philosopher, the town of Greeley, the surrounding country and the people on all sides have grown and prospered more than in any other part of the Centennial state. It is one of the richest and most productive portions of the great state. The section of country in the vicinity is frequently spoken of as the "garden spot of Colorado," and long since it gained the reputation of growing the finest potatoes produced in the Union.

The first town established in northern Colorado was Colona. It was laid out in 1859, during the Pike's Peak gold-mining excitement, but later the name was changed to Laporte. The town became an important point in the early days, there being at one time in the place as many as fifty houses, and town lots commanded a higher price than those in Denver. When Denver and Auraria consolidated, in 1860, Laporte soon lost its prestige.

Concerning the early history of Laporte in its palmy staging days, the *Rocky Mountain News* has the following.

"The Indians were not the only source of annoyance in the early days. The Overland Stage Company's employees were in many cases more carefully guarded against. They were a drunken, carousing set in the main, and absolutely careless of the rights or feelings of the settlers. The great desperado, Slade, who was for a time superintendent of this division, and was later hung in Montana by a vigilance committee on general principles, exhausted his ingenuity in devising new breadths and depths of deviltry. In his commonest transactions with others, Slade always kept his hand laid back in a light, easy fashion on the handle of his revolver. One of his most facetious tricks was to cock a revolver in a stranger's face and walk him into the nearest saloon to set up the drinks to a crowd. He did not treat the passengers over the line any better.

"One pitch-dark night the stage was started from Laporte with Slade and a lot of employees aboard in the convulsions of a 'booze,' and one unfortunate passenger. Six wild mustangs were brought out and hitched to the stage, requiring a hostler to each until the driver gathered up his lines. When they were thrown loose the coach dashed off like a limited whirlwind, the wild, drunken Jehu, in mad delight, keeping up a constant crack, crack, with his 'snake' whip. The stage traveled for a time on the two off wheels, then lurched over and traveled on the other two by way of variety. The passenger had a dim suspicion that this was the wild West, but never having seen anything of the kind before, and, being in a sort of tremor, was unable to decide clearly. Slade and his gang whooped and yelled like demons. Fortunately the passenger had taken the precaution before starting to secure an outside seat. The only way in which he was enabled to prevent the complete wreck of stage, necks and everything valuable was finally by an earnest threat that he would report the whole affair to the company. Slade and some of his men went on a tear on another occasion, when they paid the Laporte grocer a visit, threw pickles, cheese, vinegar, sugar and coal-oil in a heap on the floor, rolled the grocer in the mess, and then hauled him up on the Laramie plains, and dumped him out, to find his way home to the best of his ability. It was only a specimen of the horse-play in which they frequently indulged."

It was known immediately after the consolidation that Denver would become the great metropolis of the new gold region, and naturally Laporte kept rapidly declining. In the fall of 1863 new life was infused into the town. The overland stage line changed its route from Lodge Pole creek, opposite old Julesburg, to near the site of the Cherokee City post-office—Latham—140 miles west of the old crossing. The new crossing on the south fork of the Platte was a short distance below the mouth of the Cache la Poudre, thirty-five miles east from Laporte.

After the change to the new route the stages forded the South Platte at Latham station and followed up the Cherokee trail along the Cache la Poudre to Laporte, which was made a "home" station on the stage line. Its location was rather picturesque when I first saw it, in the summer of 1864, nestled, as it was, at the foot of the eastern slope of the Rockies.

Laporte was quite a prominent little town in 1864, but in all there were not to exceed half a dozen houses in the pioneer northern Colorado town, as I well remember it, when the civil war was in progress and when the hostile savages had possession of nearly 300 miles of the stage road east along the Platte and Little Blue rivers. At one time there were no less than half a dozen places where liquor was dispensed at all hours of the day and night. The blacksmith located there said he used to get eight dollars for shoeing a horse or setting a tire. There appeared to be an abundance of deer and antelope in the foot-hills, and the Cache la Poudre was alive with trout, little more than a stone's throw from the town.

In the summer of 1864, I saw in one large, deep hole in the Poudre, near Laporte, thousands of trout lying at the bottom of the stream. A great many of them would have measured fully eighteen inches in length, and I estimated them equivalent to two full wagon-loads. It was during the grasshopper raid in that region, and fishermen could not catch them. While I had my fishing tackle with me and spent some time angling for the speckled beauties, I was not so much as rewarded by a nibble.

There was a hotel in Laporte in the early days known as the Ferry House. The old stage station used by Ben. Holladay in the '60's was a prominent building. It is yet standing, but has been somewhat remodeled since the lively days of overland staging through the place, from 1863 to 1870. Prices were firm in 1864. Eggs readily brought $1.25 to $1.50 a dozen; butter, $1 a pound; sugar, 50 cents a pound; potatoes, 16 cents a pound. Whisky was cheap, and cost only "two bits" a glass. It was hinted that the weather during the winter season in those early days must have been unusually cold, for it was told one day that a prominent citizen, who had entered the back room of one of the liquor houses to get his bottle filled, said the only way he could get it was by thawing out the whisky—the application being a red-hot poker inserted in the bung-hole of the barrel.

Few would have dreamed that early season that the Poudre valley was fit for anything except for stock-raising. For growing cereals, many kinds of fruit, and most of the tender vegetables, no one believed such things possible. It was often remarked in 1863 that corn could never be grown in Colorado. In a quarter of a century following, after hundreds of miles of ditches had been constructed, the Poudre valley had been transformed into a veritable wheat- and corn-field and a well-cultivated garden. Fine, highly improved farms, choice fruit orchards, and "cattle on a thousand hills" are sights that now daily meet one's eye. The valley has become one of the choicest dairy regions in the West. In it are thousands of cows and a vast number of hives of bees; the region is virtually a land "flowing with milk and honey."

It is a pleasure to look back on Colorado as it was a third of a century ago, and note some of the wonderful changes that have taken place during that time. Although some of the days spent on the South Platte at Latham station in 1863 and 1864 were extremely lonesome—days of great anxiety—still many of them I shall always remember, and cherish among the pleasantest days of my recollection. I have no desire, however, again to pass through the stirring period embracing some of the scenes and exciting events that were witnessed along the Platte in the '60's. That was during the days of overland staging and freighting, before the advent of the iron horse on the "Great American Desert." Those early days, at times terribly trying and exciting—particularly while the Indians were making their raids—have long since gone by. Soon they will have passed from the memory of us all. Of what transpired in that vicinity before and since the memorable summer of 1864 I have nothing to say. That story will be told, if it has not already been told, by those who resided there before and since my time.

It is something of a coincidence that, in just six years after I left Latham, when that stage station was abandoned on account of the stage route being changed to the cut-off some miles south of there, I spent a day in Greeley, the county-seat of Weld county, when the town was only six months old, and set a stickful of type on the first issue of the Greeley *Tribune*, founded by the late Hon. N. C. Meeker, formerly an employee of the great philosopher after whom the new town and paper were named.

CHAPTER XV.

INDIAN RAIDS, AND ADVENTURES ON THE PLAINS.

SOME of the most horrible atrocities committed by the Indians on the plains were along the overland stage route. The savages made a raid, beginning August 7, 1864. In one of their attacks they captured a train of nine wagons belonging to Simonton & Smith, loaded with goods for George Tritch, the Denver pioneer hardware merchant. Everything that could not be used to advantage by the savages was destroyed. This raid was one of the most memorable attacks ever made on the overland line. It was planned and executed with clever military precision, a simultaneous attack being made from near old Julesburg, on the South Platte, and extending east down to Liberty Farm station, on the Little Blue river, a distance of about 250 miles. The attack was indiscriminate, being made upon the stage-coaches, freight wagon-trains, pilgrims, stations, ranches, etc., and, all together, some thirty or forty people were killed. The butcheries perpetrated were the worst at Liberty Farm and in the vicinity. The attack on and burning of that station; the destruction of the wagon-train loaded with hardware, and the killing of the entire party; the murder and scalping of Joe Eubanks, the stage-driver and station keeper, and the capture of Mrs. Eubanks and her child, it is said, led to the Sand Creek battle, when the Colorado volunteers, under command of the gallant Colonel Chivington, a noted military leader of pioneer days, surrounded a tribe of hostile savages and almost wiped them from the face of the earth. Concerning the attack a Denver paper says:

"It is an historic incident, and a bloody one. And an aged woman in McCune, Kan., tells, in connection with it, a story of brutality and outrage she and her child suffered at the hands of the marauding redskins that fiction cannot parallel. . . .

"Prominently connected with the story is Oliver P. Wiggins, deputy United States marshal, on duty at the Denver post-office. Thirty-five years ago Wiggins had gained fame as a scout who had been a trapper with Kit Carson, and had hunted over what was afterward Colorado, the state of 'red soil,' long before the discovery of gold attracted the seeker of fortune to Pike's Peak.

"George Tritch," he relates, "in July of 1864, was expecting nine wagons filled with hardware from the States. The train was under the charge of Simonton & Smith, well known freighters of those days, and represented a value of over $22,000.

"The goods were being conveyed through an Indian country, and Mr. Tritch's anxiety over their safety was augmented by the report current in Denver that the Indians were on the war-path and had heard of this richly laden overland train.

"Colonel Chivington and Mr. Tritch had Bill Comstock and myself do a little scouting to find out the truth of the report. Comstock was a character, the 'Buffalo Bill' of Colorado, from whom 'Buffalo Bill' Cody of Nebraska took his name. Bill Comstock was a half-breed and could go among the Arapahoes with comparative safety. It was these Indians who were creating trouble, and who, Tritch was warned, had started out in the direction the Simonton & Smith wagons were taking. Comstock took down the Republican river, and I went down the Platte. Bill overtook them, 150 braves, near the mouth of White Man's Fork, or Frenchman's creek, about 250 miles from Denver. At Plum Creek, thirty-five miles west of Fort Kearney, Bill reported to me, about August 1, that the Indians were going down the Republican river, but there was nothing unusually suspicious in their appearance. He returned to the Indians. Below Kearney they told him they were going to St. Joseph, Mo., and were giving no trouble. So he came to Kearney and stayed with me.

"It was on August 7 that the outbreak occurred. David Street, paymaster of the stage-coach company, had come past, paying off. He brought the news to Kearney that the Indians had killed all the Eubanks family, in addition to three others and some ten or eleven settlers, who were peacefully farming on the Muddy near the Little Blue. They had also killed Smith and nine of his drivers, and burned up the entire train, after looting it of the cutlery and tinware, and particularly of the lead pipe, which represented more than money to them, as it furnished material for their bullets. They placed this booty in the care of a large party, who took it north to the Cheyenne agency. The braves then started rapidly back up the Republican river with Mrs. Eubanks and her child, a year and a half of age.

"They had saved the woman for a purpose worse than death. She was a blonde, with complexion so fair that the prairie sun had freckled her somewhat, and the hair that waved around her head was the prettiest reddish gold I have ever seen.

"She had seen her husband scalped before her eyes and had almost been killed with him. A warrior roughly picked up her child, and, grasping its heels, was about to dash out the little one's brains against a tree trunk, when, with the strength born of desperation, Mrs. Eubanks seized the Indian and pulled him back. He tripped and fell. Seizing the infant she started to run, when the brave drew his knife and made after her. The frightened woman was on the point of being murdered when chief Two-face interposed. 'What warrior are you?' he asked, 'to be thrown by a squaw. I will take this woman for my own; touch her if you dare!'

"What ensued is too horrible to tell. She was seated on a horse and her feet tied under her. Clasping her child in her arms, she rode under the burning sun until the Indians pitched camp. Great blisters covered her body. Her tender skin was almost raw. She would have died, she said afterwards, had it not been for her infant. The chief claimed and took possession of her next morning, and covered her unprotected shoulders with a buffalo robe. This kindly action brought the tears to her eyes. Although the robe chafed her it was of the greatest protection to the mother and the child. The Indians headed for Sand creek.

"Comstock and I left immediately for Plum Creek, on receipt of the news, and secured a squad of soldiers to take the trail up the Republican. Several Arapahoes had gone among the whites and spread the report that the Pawnees had committed the murders. The friendly and innocent tribe, taking umbrage at this, went out, found some scattered Arapahoes, and brought back their scalps.

"We came upon the Indians suddenly. We saw Mrs. Eubanks and her child riding behind chief Two-face, but our charge was met by a resistance that surprised us. We were outnumbered and whipped, retreating without any dead, but minus five or six horses.

"When the Arapahoes reached Sand creek they began a series of depredations and outrages on the divide that made many faces white with anger when the news was received in Denver. Colonel Chivington raised an army, and the famous battle of Sand creek resulted, on November 20. The scouts of the Indians met Chivington's scouts on the Big Sandy, 120 miles from Denver. The white men were extremely friendly.

"'Where are you going?' asked the Indians.

"'To Texas, to fight the rangers,' was the response.

"For once the Indians were completely taken in. Some of them even volunteered to go along, but their offers were declined. A terrible blinding dust storm arose, and in the night Chivington's army made a forced march, and when morning broke had the Indians surrounded.

"The night of the battle, three chiefs, Two-face, Doc Billy, and Big Thunder, escaped, taking the white woman with them, and made for Cheyenne agency, where they kept her until the next fall.

"During her fourteen months of captivity she suffered untold horrors. Every squaw at the agency shamed her and abuses were heaped upon her. Several times she tried to end her life, but the cunning Two-face caught her and made the frenzied woman desist.

"They needed arms and ammunition. After a council at the agency, it was decided to take Mrs. Eubanks to Fort Laramie and sell her to her people. Mrs. Eubanks told Colonel Baumer, in command at the post, then boasting of 300 men, of the horrors to which she had been subjected. The three chiefs met the colonel and two orderlies a mile or so below the fort. Twenty bucks were posted in the hills some distance beyond, to receive the goods they expected. As soon as the colonel heard her story he told the orderlies to stroll down the river, throwing pebbles at the dogs, in a manner not to excite suspicion, until they were out of sight. They were then to run to the post and call out all the cavalry, surrounding the Indians. The plan succeeded admirably, and the three chiefs were placed in irons.

"At that time I was scouting at Alkali, and General Connor and General Heath, who was delivering to the former the command of the district of Colorado, were at my place. Colonel Baumer telegraphed them of the arrest of the chiefs, and Mrs. Eubanks was brought in and told her story over the wire.

"General Connor asked: 'Where are those villains now?'

"The answer clicked: 'In chains.'

"General Connor replied: 'If you have them in chains, hang them in chains.'

"Baumer sprang from his table in the telegraph room and placed a guard at the door, with orders to let no one pass in or out. The door was locked with the operator inside. The Indians were taken out, tied by chains around the neck, and the wagon driven from under them. They died in horrible convulsions.

"When Colonel Baumer returned, this message was handed to him: 'Colonel, I was a little hasty. Bring them to Julesburg and give the wretches a trial.'

"Then occurred the best thing in the Indian war. The colonel sent the following: 'Dear General—I obeyed your first order before I received the second.'

"Mrs. Eubanks is now a Mrs. Atkinson, living in McCune, Kan."

David Street, paymaster of the stage line, passed over the road immediately after the raid at Liberty Farm. He was the first man to carry the news on the stage to Fort Kearney. He had a narrow escape. "But for a delay on the railroad east of St. Joseph," he said, "I would have been in the midst of it."

An amusing incident of this raid, and the almost miraculous escape of a stage-coach, was related just afterward by Henry Carlyle, so long manager of the stage company's ox and mule wagon-trains, and who at the time was on the box with the driver. Carlyle is a man of ready tact and possessed of remarkable presence of mind, and it was fortunate that he was on the coach:

"The coach was full of mail. As we came near to one of the road ranches in the vicinity of O'Fallon's Bluffs, some distance west of Cottonwood Springs, we found that the Indians had captured it, had rolled out a barrel of whisky and knocked the head in, and were drinking it out of tin cups. The whole band were in the midst of a drunken revelry. The driver was greatly alarmed and suggested that we run by at full speed. But I said: 'No; do nothing unusual to attract their attention. You are in the habit of watering here. Drive right up at the regular gait and water as usual. Above all keep cool; keep your seat and have your team in hand. I will get down with the bucket and water the team.' My last words before getting down from the box were to urge the importance of keeping cool. 'If we are lucky enough to get away from here we will let the team out. These Indians have been lying in the bluffs for days. They have watched

A SERIO-COMIC INCIDENT IN HENRY CARLYLE'S EXPERIENCE. *Page 358.*

the coaches come and go, and know all the movements along the valley of stages and trains. If nothing unusual is done, we will not, in their present condition, attract their attention immediately.'

"Just as I was through watering the horses and ready to get on the stage, an Indian made a rush for me. He struck me on the neck and came near landing me in the well. Without thinking what I was doing at the time, I jammed the bucket down over the Indian's head and shoulders. It was one of those large, flaring cedar buckets, and it came down so tight he could not get it off. In trying to get the bucket I pulled the bail out. He presented such a ludicrous sight that the Indians—many of them so drunk they could hardly stand—gathered around him, having lots of fun at his expense. He was down on all fours, and another Indian so pleased jumped across his back and rode him around the premises. I did not wait long to enjoy the sport with them, but, as quick as I could, climbed up on the box by the side of the driver and told him to go at a good rapid stage gait until they got a little ways off, and then put the team into a dead run for the next station. Some of the Indians soon recovered from their surprise, and the most of them realized that the coach, with its load of mail, was getting away. They hurriedly mounted their ponies, and, with their wild yells when on the war-path, gave us a hot chase, but for once they were outgeneraled. The coach had some distance the start, and, with the superior horses hitched to it, the Indians were finally obliged to give up the chase.

"The premises surrounding the ranch, with Indians on all sides, presented a graphic scene: the barrel of whisky, with the head knocked in; the savages having supplied themselves with new tin cups from the ranchman's stock of goods—each with a tin cup and drinking the whisky and dancing a wild dance around the barrel. Some of them had become stupid from the effects of the liquor and were lying around on the ground just as they fell, the most of them making hideous noises that might be likened unto a pandemonium. It was a close call for the driver and me, the only ones on the stage-coach."

The whisky and Carlyle's tact and good judgment saved both from being horribly butchered.*

Henry Carlyle, senior of the Carlyle brothers, was manager of the freighting firm of Holladay & Carlyles, consisting of Ben. Holladay and Henry and Alex. Carlyle. The supply trains of the stage line—both mule and ox outfits—were controlled by them. They had the entire contract for the transportation of all supplies for the line. The Carlyle brothers were well-known freighters and had often been employed in the business. Mr. Holladay found on the line a number of supply trains, and soon discovered that they were not always properly handled. He knew, also, that a good stage man was not always a good freighter, and, with that rare good judgment that seemed never to fail him in those days, he selected Henry Carlyle to manage the supply trains, and proposed a partnership, each to put in their trains at their market value. The proposition was accepted, and proved to be very successful and mutually profitable. The partnership, which commenced in 1862, continued until the completion of the Union Pacific railroad, with Henry Carlyle as manager. Everybody along the stage line knew Henry Carlyle. He was born a Kentuckian, with all the hospitable, genial manners of his people, and a hail-fellow-well-met with every man, woman and child on the "Overland." He was endowed with rare good judgment and superior business qualifications. For many years he has lived on a fruit farm in Orange county, California, and is now over seventy years old and almost blind. He has a happy family around him, with some grown-up boys and girls.

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*After the disastrous raid along the Platte in the summer and fall of 1864, when so many stations were wiped out by the savages, it became necessary to make a number of changes before the route could be opened for the transportation of the mails and express and the carrying of passengers. One of the prominent stage stations down the South Platte east of Denver, between Bijou creek and Valley Station, after the raid, was Godfrey's Ranch. This station was built of sod or adobe, and for a time, during the unprecedented Indian troubles, the premises were besieged. Godfrey, however, had taken the precaution to build some "fortifications," and his place was christened "Fort Wicked." A band of savages hung around the premises and held Godfrey and his family several days, yet he resisted, alone, the entire party with no help but his own family, and during the siege killed a number of savages.

HENRY CARLYLE.

The cost of removal of the stage line from the North Platte and Sweetwater or South Pass route to the route through Bridger's Pass, along Laramie Plains and Bitter creek (sometimes called the "Cherokee Trail" or "Bitter Creek" route), and the damages incident to it, was shown by an affidavit of Col. Isaac E. Eaton. Colonel Eaton was superintendent of the line under Holladay in 1862, when the Indian raids, detailed in his evidence, were perpetrated. As shown by this evidence, Holladay was compelled to abandon twenty-six stations, worth $2000 each, and a large amount of forage and other articles of value, necessary to the running of the line, of the amount of which Colonel Eaton could form no true estimate; but Holladay, who had to pay for supplies to replace those lost on the old line and abandoned under enforced removal, states that $25,000 would not cover these losses.

A vast amount of damage was done between October, 1864, and December, 1865, by the United States soldiers, who visited stations whenever they felt like it and helped themselves to anything they wanted which happened to be in sight. They indiscriminately took hay, grain, provisions, fuel, etc. At one time they took twenty-nine head of oxen at Fort Kearney, worth $100 a head; and 100 cords of wood at Julesburg, worth fifty dollars a cord. When a receipt was wanted for property taken it was refused. To stop the raids on the stations by the soldiers a military order was procured. Geo. K. Otis, the general superintendent for several years, made a careful estimate of the property taken, which he placed at $30,000. Mr. Carlyle, who for years transported most of the supplies for the stage line, testified that $30,000 was not an overestimate of the damage inflicted by the military on the stage line. David Street also testified that the line was subjected to serious losses in consequence of damage done and property taken by the soldiers. William Reynolds, superintendent of the line from October, 1864, to March, 1866, stated that large quantities of hay, grain and wood were consumed by the military on the stage line, the property of Holladay; also, several houses and stables were used for fuel and other purposes.

The losses sustained by Holladay from Indian depredations from 1862 to 1865 were enormous, and ran up into the hundreds of thousands. The following will give a pretty fair idea of the value of the property stolen and destroyed, as prices ruled on the frontier during the civil war:

Nine cows and one bull taken	$525 00
Two bales of clothing taken at Julesburg*	1,500 00
Stage-coach destroyed and two coaches injured	1,700 00
Harness destroyed	6,610 00
Oxen taken (96 head)	9,100 00
Hay destroyed (377 tons)	17,040 00
Damage to stations, furniture, corrals, etc	78,375 00
Horses and mules taken (453 head)	111,970 00
Grain taken and destroyed (6473 sacks)†	149,019 72
Making a total of	$375,839 72

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*Old Julesburg was destroyed by the Indians on February 2, 1865. The burning of this place was the greatest pecuniary loss of any station on the stage line. Nothing was

The Indians on the route northwest of old Julesburg began their deviltry on the overland stage line in the summer of 1862. The line was damaged and badly broken up. On the recommendation of Colonel Chivington, commanding the district of Colorado, and by the consent of the post-office department, the mail route was changed. Instead of crossing the South Platte at old Julesburg and going *via* the North Platte and Sweetwater route, it crossed the South Platte at Latham station and went over the route known as the "Cherokee Trail," across the Laramie plains, over Bridger's Pass, and along the Bitter Creek country, intersecting the old road at Fort Bridger. The change from the old route in distance was from 100 to 300 miles, and the cost to the company in moving was over $50,000. In making the change, it was necessary to abandon some 300 miles of road on the old route, twenty-six mail stations, and build twenty-five additional stations on the new route. This was a big undertaking, but it had to be done. Gen. James Craig, of St. Joseph, Mo., who often made trips over the stage line and was thoroughly familiar with the country and the depredations of the Indians, subsequently testified before the congressional committee, at Washington, that it was not possible to protect the line against Indians on the old route, and that it could only be kept up "with the consent of the Indians themselves."

Concerning Indian fighting on the plains in 1867, Maj. W. H. Russell had a lively experience with the Cheyennes, which was told some time ago by him in the Chicago *Tribune:*

> ". . . . I remember the Cheyennes were raising Cain along the overland stage route, attacking stages, plundering stations and mail-bags, and chopping down telegraph wires. This was in Colorado, between Fort Morgan and Fort Sedgwick. I went out with a company of sixty men to reestablish the route. We had just got beyond a place called Moore's, a sort of station for the stage line, and a stage came up as we laid in camp after a hard day's march. The Indians had been crawling around trying to surprise us; but no Indian fighter is ever surprised, and I was ready for them. The men on the stage were for going on; but I said: 'I would n't if I were you; for there 's about sixty of those devils hiding among those sand-hills

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spared. The houses, barns, warehouses, telegraph office, blacksmith shop, and sheds—the logs for which had been hauled over 100 miles by oxen—were all burnt by the infuriated demons. The loss on buildings was $33,000; thirty tons of hay, at fifty dollars, $1500; 3500 sacks of corn (392,000 pounds), at twenty cents per pound, $78,400; provisions and stores, $2000; one horse taken, $200; total, $115,100.

†Of the one item of grain taken, there were 22,000 pounds of oats, 15,000 pounds of barley, and 678,720 pounds of corn.

over yonder.' The stage-driver knew his business and went back to Moore's. I told them I was going to march in the morning at five o'clock. There was a woman with her children in the stage, too, by the way. The men were indignant at turning back, but the driver had the advantage. Well, next morning about 7:30 o'clock we saw the stage-coach behind us in the sand-hills, and out popped the Indians. Part of us got back and drove them off. The Indian does n't fight unless he has clearly the best of it from the start. Well, you ought to have seen the civilians who were so hot to go ahead the night before. They were shaking hands with everybody and crying and carrying on. The woman with the children sat inside the stage all the time cool as a cucumber and never cheeped. But some of the soldiers' wives with our main party, out of harm's way, bellowed and shrieked like all possessed. They came up to my wife, who was alone in an ambulance, and she told them they ought to be ashamed of themselves. They ought to act like soldiers' wives and not babies.

"Well, we went on, and found that the stage coming east from Denver on the strength of the report that I was going to clear the line and reestablish the stations, putting two of my men at each place, had been attacked and the driver and horses killed. The mail-bags had all been rifled and such envelopes as looked as if they might have money in them were ripped open. I shall always believe there was a renegade white man among them. But there was no trace of any passenger killed. And now comes the funny part of the story.

"After we got into camp again, as I was smoking after supper, a long, lanky, muddy man came up and introduced himself as Mr. So-and-so—I forget his name now, a minister from Denver—and wanted to borrow a rifle, so he could take the stage on east. Says he: 'I was on that stage that the Indians got yesterday.' I looked at him as much as to say, 'Tell that to the dog-robber.' He saw I did n't take any stock in his story, and he said: 'I suppose you hardly believe me.' 'Well,' says I, 'if you were n't a minister of the Gospel I should say you were a —— liar.'

"Then he told me his story. He was the only passenger, and as it was a hot day he had his shoes and coat off and was dozing, when 'Bang! bang!' went a lot of guns, and he looked out and saw a lot of Indians whooping and digging out for the stage-coach. He saw the driver keel over, shot through the head,* and the horses swerve from the road off onto the prairie. His first impulse was to get the lines and fetch the horses back into the road, and he believed he could beat the Indians in a race. So he climbed out of the window and got upon the box, but the lines had dropped on the ground and the four horses were just more than streaking it. He climbed down on the pole to pick up the lines, the Indians popping away at him all the time, and just then the coach struck a wallow, a sort of gutter about two feet wide and perhaps nine inches deep, and down he went into the mud, and the stage went on without him. 'Well,' thinks he, 'it 's all up with me now. They 'll torture me sure.' But whether they thought he was dead or that they would come back after him, they rode around him, and made for the coach. Then the thought came to him that he might give them the slip. 'I prayed to God Almighty for all I was worth,' he said, 'and then I slid along on my stomach in the mud till I got to where the ground sloped down toward the Platte river. But they saw me, and three of them came after me on their ponies. Well sir,' says he, 'I had only my socks on, and that place was as full of cactus thorns as a flax hackle, but I got away from them in a hurry, I tell you. I was a pretty good swimmer, and if I could get into the water I was pretty near all right. Just then the three Indians stopped and looked west. I turned, too, and there were two men with guns coming down the river bank on my side, as if to cut me off. But I had prayed, and I was n't going to give up then; so I made a bee line for the river, and got on the other side and was shaking myself when I heard somebody holler in English, "Come over! we won't hurt you." I told them I was just as safe where I was. Then they hollered back that they were two soldiers from Fort Sedgwick come out hunting, and, would you believe it? they had n't heard that there were Indians in the neighborhood.'

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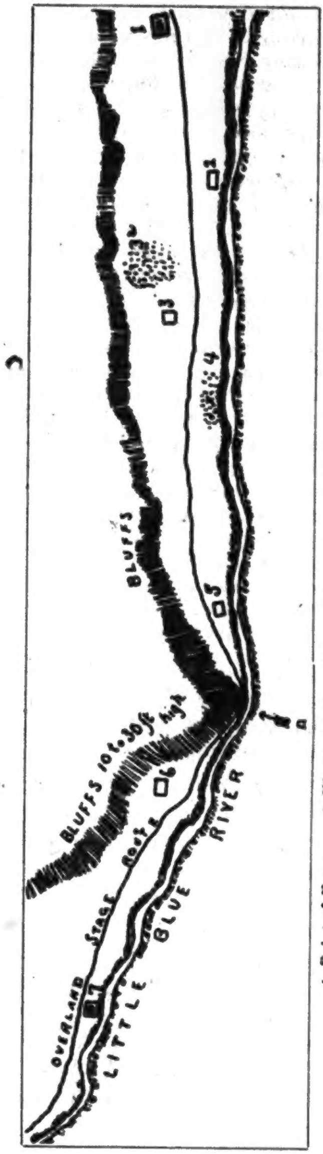
*The team driven by Kilburn was four fine grays. When he had reached a point two and a half miles east of Godfrey's, where five Cheyenne Indians were secreted behind an old adobe wall, a volley was fired and Kilburn fell dead to the ground. His falling stopped the team. Instantly the savages made a rush and secured the horses, taking all the trimmings from the harness. They also cut the front and hind leather boots from the coach; then cut open and rifled the mail-sacks. There was only one passenger aboard —a minister of the Gospel, from Denver—and he, having his boots off, hurriedly jumped from the stage and ran back along the river bank to the station. Closely behind the coach was a boy with four stage horses, riding one and leading the other three. When he saw the Indians fire and Kilburn fall from the box, he instantly turned loose the three animals he was leading and ran them back to Godfrey's, thus saving the team and, what was of far more value to him, his own scalp. He escaped, but it was a very close call.

"You see they saw my force coming up the road and those two men coming along the river, and they thought we were going to surround them and bucket them to pieces; so they ran. Well, I gave the man his rifle, and I thought he 'd earned it."

A number of heroic incidents occurred along the stage route in the Little Blue valley. Robert Emery, born at Industry, Me., a young man skilful in handling a four-horse team, happened to be in Atchison when a rumor came that the Indians were on the war-path and that the station of Liberty Farm had been burnt; also that his brother Charles, keeper of the station, together with his family and a number of other persons, were probably massacred. This rumor came when traffic by the stage line was at its zenith. In the face of such an exciting rumor, none of the old drivers in Atchison seemed willing to go out on the line and in all probability meet certain death at the hands of a band of savages. It was not so with Bob Emery, the young driver. He had relatives and friends at the scene of hostilities and he volunteered to take the coach to Liberty Farm. He left Atchison with nine passengers—seven men and two ladies. The rest of the story told on the following pages is from the Omaha *Bee*.



A, Point of Narrows; 1, Kiowa station; 2, German's ranch; 3, Comstock's ranch; 3a, Grove of oak trees; 4, Willows where Mrs. Eubanks and her child were taken by Indians; 5, Eubanks' ranch; 6, Jesse Ewing's ranch; 7, Little Blue station.

"The morning of August 9, 1864, was beautiful. The sky was clear and cool and a refreshing breeze came up from the northwest. The coach left the station at Big Sandy with its freight of human life drawn by four large and mettled steeds in which the driver had unbounded confidence and over them perfect control. The journey was without accident or unusual incident until after eleven o'clock, up to which time no signs of Indians had been seen. But just as the lead horses had passed over the hill and were on the spur that led into the bottom land or valley—this was narrow, and bordered on either side by deep ravines, worn by the water—and before the coach had commenced the descent, the driver discovered a band of Indians about thirty rods in advance. (Among the stage men this locality was known as "The Narrows.") He wheeled the horses in an instant—two rods further on he could not have accomplished the turn—and, laying whip to their backs, commenced an impetuous retreat. The passengers were terrified, and were at once on their feet. Emery said: 'If you value your lives, for God's sake keep your seats, or we are lost.'

"The Indians, about fifty in number, gave chase with their terrifying yell, and for about three miles, which were accomplished in about twelve minutes, pursued and pursuers made the most desperate efforts at speed. The savage yells of those bloodthirsty villains and the wails of despair of the men and women in the coach are past the power of pen to describe. But to the glory of the driver be it said that he was the only steady nerved and unexcited person in this memorable chase. The coach bristled with arrows, 'like quills upon the fretful porcupine.' They grazed young Emery on every side and cut the rosette off the head of the wheel horse, but the young man heeded nothing but his driving.

"There were two points at which all would have been lost but for the driver's wonderful presence of mind. There were two abrupt turns in the road where the coach would have been thrown over had he not brought the team to a halt and turned with care. This he did to the dismay of some of the passengers, who saw escape only in speed, but their subsequent praise of his conduct was as great as his courage was cool and calculating. George Constable, who was conducting an ox train over the route, saw the coach about a mile ahead, and at once corralled his twenty-five wagons.

"The brave driver drove his nine passengers into this shelter and safety. Words could not express the gratitude felt for their hero and deliverer. In the delirium of delight they embraced and kissed him, and thanked God that he had held the lines, and that they were in a position where they could not interfere. The noble horses were not forgotten. The passengers petted them and put their arms about their necks with feelings of gratitude.

"This memorable drive would never be forgotten, though not recorded here; for the story would be handed down to posterity by the successive generations of the saved. The hero of that day's chase won not his best laurels in that hour; for wherever he was known his gentle manner and kind deeds won for him a welcome in every heart, and wherever known there were praises heard. Devoid of boastful pretense, he wore meekly his well-deserved honors and silently carried a hero's heart.

"His health was frail, and in about a year he was prostrated with fever, and while upon his death-bed, yet still conscious, Mrs. Randolph, one of the number he had saved from a horrible death, placed upon his finger a beautiful gold ring, on which was engraved the following:

E. Umphry, G. C. Randolph,
and Hattie P. Randolph, to
ROBERT EMERY,
in acknowledgment of what we owe
to his cool conduct and good driving on
Tuesday, August 9, 1864.

"Soon after this he passed away from these scenes of warfare to the silent and peaceful realm of the dead. The doctor who attended him in his last hours eulogized him as a silent hero and one of the noblest of mankind."

INDIAN FIGHT ON THE SMOKY HILL. One of the old-time stage-drivers in the service of the original Overland Mail Company was a young man named Enoch Cummings. The great overland line that transported the first through mail went into operation in the fall of 1858. The route extended across the continent. Mr. Cummings drove a four-horse team hitched to a Concord coach on the line southwest from Tipton, Mo. After the war broke out it became necessary to change the route.

Mr. Cummings, from his long experience as a driver, was

Indian boys shooting at a target. *Page 85.*

transferred, with a number of other employees, from the southern to the central route. He drove on the latter at different points between the Missouri river and old Julesburg, Colo., on the south side of the Platte, until 1867. That part of the great stage line between Atchison and Fort Kearney was then knocked out by the completion of the Union Pacific road from Omaha west along the north side of the Platte.

The iron horse having invaded the Platte valley, it seemed that there was no longer any use for the stage line from Atchison up the Little Blue river a distance of about 250 miles to Fort Kearney. This much of the great through stage route was, therefore, abandoned. The stock on this (eastern) division was sold to the Wells, Fargo & Co.'s Express, which operated a daily stage line on the Smoky Hill route from Junction City, then the western terminus of the Union (Kansas) Pacific railway, to Denver, a distance of 465 miles.

Previous to reopening this route, Mr. Cummings had charge in moving the stock between Atchison and Fort Kearney over to the Smoky Hill route, and, on the latter, he was employed as division agent. It was a responsible and, in view of the movements of the hostile savages, likewise a dangerous position. For his services he was paid $200 a month; but the risks he ran of being scalped were too great, and even this handsome salary was no inducement for him to remain and put himself up as a target for flying Indian arrows or whizzing bullets. It was during the period of the Indian troubles, after the close of the civil war, and for a long time there was little peace for the stage men or for any one else traveling that region. It was a hazardous undertaking, and those who attempted to make the trip across the plains before the days of railroads west of the Missouri simply took their lives in their own hands.

Hundreds of miles, sitting up on the box, have I ridden with Cummings, when I was express messenger and mail agent on the overland stage line between Atchison and Denver, in 1863-'65. It is learned from a friendly chat with Mr. Cummings, since the old staging days, that he was in one of the liveliest Indian fights that ever took place on the Smoky Hill route. It was at Monument station, on the north side of the Smoky Hill river. The date was August 22, 1867, and the sight preceding the engagement he reports as the grandest his eyes ever feasted on.

A freight-train of about forty wagons belonging to Powers & Newman, of Leavenworth, was on its way across the plains to Denver, having camped the night previous along the banks of the Smoky Hill river. The Indians, on this occasion, it appears, were after stock; and, as is their custom, they did not hesitate in committing any crime that promised to secure for them what they desired. The entire force of stage party and freighters was in the engagement that took place, and they fought the combined Sioux and Cheyennes for thirty-two hours. It was never known for certain, but it is said, by those who claim to know, that the Indians numbered several hundred. All was commotion;

> "There was running to and fro
> And mounting in hot haste."

The savages formed in line and made their grand charge at a little after five o'clock in the morning, just as the sun was coming above the eastern horizon. They came from the west and were traveling east. All were mounted upon their ponies, and, at the word of command, pushed spurs into the flanks of their animals and came forward with a mad rush. With the little party of whites all was anxiety and excitement at the time.

A FIGHT BEFORE BREAKFAST IN WESTERN KANSAS, IN 1867. *Page 367.*

Two or three minutes later the most unearthly, hideous yells ever heard went up from the vast body of Indians, as they made their brilliant and desperate assault. While mounted upon their steeds, their faces ornamented with paint of various colors, and dressed in the peculiar styles so becoming to the red man, with their shields handsomely polished and guns burnished, everything on which the sun's rays were reflected shone with dazzling brilliancy. The cavalcade was a sight grand to look upon. No circus making its gorgeous entree at the beginning of an exhibition ever presented a more magnificent spectacle. In their brilliant attack, charging down upon the palefaces, with their hideous war-whoops, it was the intention of the Indians—in fact, they had so planned it—to stampede the stock belonging to the freighters and stage company, and, with their overwhelming numbers, run the animals off to their villages outside of civilization. But the brave little party, while thus besieged, was anticipating something of the kind and wisely had prepared for the occasion, thus, in a measure, forestalling the strategic move so cunningly planned by treacherous Mr. Lo.

While thus besieged, all the water Mr. Cummings and his party could get was by digging into the sand on the Smoky Hill bottom, where thousands of buffalo had time and again wallowed, and where, quite naturally, a terrible stench had been left. In order to drink the stuff called water, it was necessary to mix vinegar with it; and even with this it was impossible to force down but a swallow or two. When one drink of the nauseating beverage was taken it only created a thirst for another one. Between bad water and still worse Indians, the situation was serious, and not particularly interesting, for the mere handful of men composing the stage party and freighters. The whites anticipated the trouble and were prepared to resist the attack.

While the engagement was in progress, luckily a Government freight-train of some twenty-five wagons came along and corralled in the immediate vicinity of the hostilities. Accompanying this train was a small detachment of soldiers, and all together the employees of both trains made a pretty strong force, in the corral as they were, using the wagons for breastworks. Being on the defensive, they were able to, and did, successfully keep off the Indians, who numbered at least ten to their one.

After the exciting engagement, followed by the round-up, it was observed that the Indians had a pair of sorrel bobtail stage horses taken from Ben. Holladay, proprietor of the central stage line. The animals were run off from Lone Tree station, on the Little Blue river, in southern Nebraska, in a raid there by the savages three years previous. Mr. Cummings saw and recognized the horses as a span he had often driven in the Blue valley, on the overland stage route, when employed by Holladay on that line in the early '60's. On this occasion the animals were ridden by the redskins to a piece of low ground where they dismounted. At the time the animals were stolen, in the summer of 1864, when horse-flesh was up to war prices, they would readily have brought between $500 and $600. Three years' hard usage among the Indians had told on the horses. In this fight they were far from being the lively, spirited animals they used to be during their staging career; still they were pretty fair horses, capable of yet doing much service, but the Indians could, and actually *did* outrun them, after having dismounted.

It is not definitely known whether there were any casualties among the Indians, but the whites killed one Indian pony and the hostiles run off one mule; hence the fight was considered a draw.

Hunting a location.

CHAPTER XVI.

MY LAST TRIP ON THE OVERLAND STAGE.

AFTER the fearful Indian raids, resulting in the wanton destruction of life and property along the overland route between the Missouri river and Denver, in the summer of 1864, stopping all traffic for six weeks, the stage line was reopened and put in running order late the following September; but, three months afterward, there was a fresh Indian outbreak. Somewhere about the 20th of January, 1865, the Cheyennes and Sioux made a raid along the Platte and took possession of the route for a distance of several hundred miles. They played the mischief with everything in general, and Ben. Holladay's stage property in particular. In their march through the valley they burnt a large number of stations, ran off several head of horses, and stole and burnt an immense amount of hay, grain, etc., belonging to the great stage man. They also committed a number of horrible deeds, besides inflicting great financial loss on a large number of parties engaged in freighting on the plains.

In consequence, all commerce on the Platte route was for the time being paralyzed. The ox and mule trains *en route* had all corralled at safe places, at intervals of fifty to seventy-five miles. The overland staging business was again suddenly stopped, and no west-bound stage-coach left Atchison for several weeks. A vast quantity of mail for Denver and other Colorado points, in addition to the regular overland mail, had accumulated.

While it was deemed an extremely risky undertaking, nevertheless the stage authorities, after careful deliberation, decided to send out a mail coach on the 7th of February, trusting to Providence in getting it through. Considerably more than a ton of mail had accumulated. It was evident that some one must go along in charge of it. There was a special agent from the west only a few hours' ride from Atchison whose duty it was to go out, but he was too big a coward to make the hazardous trip. He did n't want to meet me, for only a few months before, by misrepresentation, he had borrowed twenty dollars of me, which has never been paid to this day. I was not urged to take the hazard of personally accompanying this mail, but I knew that some one ought to do so. A sense of duty compelled me to undertake the task. Accordingly I made all preparations, and on the morning agreed upon, armed with a brace of revolvers and my breech-loading rifle, I left on one of the old Concord stages, in charge of the three weeks' accumulation of important mail.

From Atchison to Fort Kearney all was smooth traveling. The overland road was never better for wheeling and good time was made. There was little Indian excitement on this division, but at the fort, around both the military headquarters and stage office, the wildest rumors were afloat of Indian barbarities that had been committed at different places along the stage line west. Excitement at the fort ran high. There was no telling what might happen on the route west at almost any hour. In view of the many wild reports coming in, the "Overland" officials decided it would not be prudent to risk a stage west that night, and, on orders from the division agent in charge of the 200-mile stretch along the Platte between Fort Kearney and old Julesburg, the coach was held until early the following morning. The reason of the detention was that the most of the run through to Cottonwood Springs—about 100 miles—could be made in daylight, and also that, by the delay, it was hoped some additional information might be obtained respecting the movements of the savages.

For fourteen hours we tarried at the fort, much of the time discussing the rumors of Indian raids. Getting an early start before daylight the next morning, which was the 10th of February, 1865, with the stage stock in splendid condition, we started off at a lively gait up the Platte. Cottonwood Springs was reached a little after nine o'clock at night, after a ride of about sixteen hours. Much of the road during the day was in poor condition; still we made over six miles an hour, including all stops. For seventy-five miles of this distance, the road, which formerly was fairly swarming with white-covered prairie-schooners as far as the eye could reach, now seemed to be as barren as a desert. Not a moving vehicle except the stage was to be seen for nearly the entire distance. All the ranches were deserted, the owners with their families having hurriedly fled for their lives. Compared with former trips along this part of the Platte, the journey was a very disagreeable and lonesome one.

The most conspicuous reminders of the horrible atrocities committed by the redskins were the graves, still fresh, of people who a few months before had been butchered along the route, and afterwards scalped by the prowling savages, and their bones left to bleach by the wayside.

We found at Cottonwood Springs the excitement still high, and wild rumors of atrocities by the redskins coming in from all directions. There was no telling how long we would be obliged to remain there, as the Indians, at intervals, it was well known, had been holding possession of portions of the line for more than 150 miles westward. No stage or freighting outfits had gone over the route for weeks. It was also known that, when the stage-coaches commenced to move west, each would have to be hauled by a single team of four or six horses for a distance of at least 200 miles, without a change of stock; also, that it was necessary to haul, at the same time, every pound of the hay and grain the animals would consume; hence, even with the best stage stock in the world, with several tons of supplies to be left along the route, from thirty-five to sixty miles a day was all that could be made, under the most favorable circumstances.

During the evening of the next day after we reached Cottonwood Springs, the following dispatch from the commanding officer at Fort Leavenworth passed over the wire:

"HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE MISSOURI,
"FORT LEAVENWORTH, February 11, 1865.

Brigadier General Mitchell, Omaha: I have just informed the Overland Mail Company that I am prepared to protect their mail through this department. See that the proper protection is given it from Fort Kearney west to insure its safety. G. M. DODGE, *Major General.*"

The receipt of this news was extremely gratifying to the officials as well as the employees of the stage line. Owners of wagon-trains all along the Platte were also happy. Active preparations were at once begun by the stage men to restock the line from Fort Kearney up the Platte to Bijou creek, a distance of about 300 miles.

For six long, weary days we remained in suspense at Cottonwood Springs. Most of the passengers and a number of the employees whiled away their time telling stories and playing poker. We left there on the morning of the 16th with three Concord coaches and a vast amount of mail matter for Colorado, Utah, and

STAGES LEAVING COTTONWOOD SPRINGS STATION WITH DELAYED MAIL AND PASSENGERS. *Page 575.*

Montana, in addition to the letter mail for the Pacific coast. One coach had been loaded with over a ton of mail and was drawn by six horses, Bill Trotter, the veteran driver, and myself being the only persons on the vehicle, and we sitting on the box.

We had to carry along our provisions from Cottonwood and our cooking and camping utensils. The manager of the commissary part of the outfit thought we had a sufficient supply at the start to last us through to Denver. Everything arranged for moving off, the entire outfit was in charge of the division agent. It was a lovely morning—a clear sky, with the sun shining beautifully. No one ever saw a more jolly, good-natured lot of fellows than those composing this party. As they journeyed westward they talked, laughed, sang songs, and told stories—"whistling through the graveyard," all day long; at the same time each was careful to keep sharp lookout for skulking Indians, though none of us was particularly anxious to meet any.

After reaching Cold Springs, the first station, fifteen miles west, another stage, which had preceded us several days, joined the train; then the four coaches traveled together all day. That night we all slept in our blankets and buffalo robes on the ground floor at Fremont Springs, the next station; nothing of particular interest to any of us, however, having transpired during the day. At four o'clock that afternoon (the 17th), we rounded up at Alkali Lake, where we overtook another coach, which also had preceded us, and had been there several days; and here we stayed all night, as usual sleeping in our robes and blankets on the floor.

Leaving Alkali on the morning of the 18th, the five coaches now in the train traveled westward together. It was 250 miles yet to Denver, but all going together helped to insure a more pleasant trip, and one safer from molestation by Indians. This portion of the Platte Valley was considered one of the most dangerous sections of the overland line. There were several passengers on the five stage-coaches, some of whom had been waiting to get away for several weeks, and about a dozen of the most fearless and experienced employees of the stage company, mounted, and armed to the teeth, went along as an escort.

Between Fremont Springs and Alkali not a living soul was seen on the road, except at O'Fallon's Bluffs, where a small detachment of the Seventh Iowa Cavalry was stationed. This was one of the most uninviting places on the route. The five coaches and the overland horsemen made quite a long train as they left Alkali, after breakfast on the morning of the 18th. Slowly we journeyed up the South Platte all day, the only sign of civilization being another detachment of the same regiment of cavalry, whose headquarters for the time being were at Beauvais ranch, otherwise known as "Ash Hollow," or "Lower California Crossing." That night we camped at South Platte station, 442 miles west of Atchison and 211 miles east of Denver.

The site of historic old Julesburg was reached at eleven o'clock on Sunday morning, the 19th. The weather, which had been lovely for a week or more, had suddenly changed that morning into a cold, stormy, disagreeable day. We had had a tedious ride of several hours, facing a northwest blizzard. The appearance of the locality was greatly changed. There was nothing remaining of the old town founded in 1859 by the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Stage Company. Everything about the premises, including the station, stables, blacksmith shop, and hay and grain depot, had been destroyed by the Indians. The store of Thompson & Chrisman, which stood near by, was not spared by the savages. The entire premises were, only a few days before, burnt, and the busy site of early years now presented a scene of extreme desolation.

Here a consultation was had by the stage party, when it was observed that our supply of food was rapidly diminishing. We all had prodigious appetites, and there was still about 200 miles to cover before reaching Denver. No one could tell how long it would take us to make the trip. It was plain that, on the balance of the journey, with the limited supply of food laid in at Cottonwood Springs, we must come to short rations or all our food would be consumed long before reaching our destination.

We were in a region inhabited by hostile Indians, and it would never do to run short on the substantials of life. We might at any hour be surrounded by savages and held for several days or weeks. It was necessary to lay in an additional supply of eatables to last us through to Denver, and thus be prepared for emergencies. There was no place, however, to get anything on the road, nearly all the ranches having been either destroyed by the savages or deserted by the occupants. There was one alternative.

During the troubles in the fall of 1864, Fort Sedgwick was built a few miles west, but in plain sight of old Julesburg. That was

A TRAIN OF CONCORD STAGES LEAVING ALKALI LAKE STATION. *Page 375.*

a glorious thing for us on that trip, as it became a "military necessity" for the division agent, Mr. Reub. S. Thomas, and for me, in the employ of the Government and in charge of more than a ton of Colorado mail matter, to make a requisition for sufficient supplies from the commissary department at this post to enable us to finish the trip. On account of its being used to facilitate the transportation of the United States mail, we had no difficulty in procuring from the officer in command at the military post 100 pounds of hardtack, a few sides of bacon, and some other needed rations. After resting a few minutes, the train of stages, with its mounted escort, departed westward. The storm was raging furiously, and we found it a severe task to sit for several hours on the box of the stage-coach facing a genuine blizzard. While our progress was necessarily slow and very tedious, still we kept moving westward. Late that afternoon the entire outfit camped—went into the corral—a short distance south of the Platte, inside the deserted adobe walls of Buffalo Springs ranch.

The terrible storm that for several hours had been raging had now subsided. Before sunset the wind went down and the sky was clear. All were hungry as a pack of wolves, not having eaten a mouthful since partaking of an early breakfast. The buildings along the route having all been burnt by the savages, we made a fire, and cooked and ate our supper out-of-doors, although the mercury had dropped several degrees below the freezing-point. Our eatables consisted of slapjacks, army hardtack, coffee, and a plenteous supply of fried bacon. The fat fried out of the bacon supplied the place of butter. Nothing in the eating line was ever relished more by a crowd of hungry stage boys. Our coffee did not go down so well. It was made from water dipped out of a slough a few rods away and was strongly impregnated with alkali.

When the "chief cook" announced supper ready, there was very little formality gone through with, as the hungry boys all sat on the ground ready to partake of this feast "good enough for a king." The first thing heard was from the pioneer driver, Bill Trotter, who remarked: "Pour me out a mule's ear full of coffee, for I'm as thirsty as an old toper." Another remarked: "Sam, hand me a slice of 'sowbelly' as long as your arm." "Bob, flip one of them 'sockdologer' slapjacks down this way." "Jake, waltz some of that petrified army hardtack over here." One driver, who did n't get ready as soon as the others, broke in with: "Boys, save me a few crumbs, for I 'm hungry enough to eat a jackass and chase the driver." All these, and many other equally odd and ludicrous expressions, were heard.

No one cared to sit up long after such a hard day's journey and after facing such a severe storm the last few hours. Having partaken of the hearty supper, and, notwithstanding it was freezing cold inside the four-foot walls of the open corral, all except a couple of the boys who had been detailed to stand guard lay down, with clothing and boots on, and slept on the snow, rolled up in blankets and a buffalo robe, with the broad, blue canopy of the sky for a counterpane. I can answer for myself, and say that I never slept better.

We left camp after breakfast on the 20th. It was a cool morning, but the sun shone brightly all day. While moving along at a slow gait, we pulled up, about ten o'clock in the forenoon, at Kelly's station, which was once known as "American Ranch" (p. 223), about 150 miles from Denver, which is fifteen miles from the eastern base of the mountains. At Kelly's a lively engagement had occurred a few days before, between the men at the station and a band of hostile Indians. During the fight the redskins, with overpowering numbers, had burnt the station, with all the property, leaving the adobe walls alone standing; but the result of the fight was, two Indians, riddled with bullets, were left dead on the premises.

On our arrival at the station, one of the dead Indians, with only one leg and one arm, was standing up against the south wall of the burnt building, while the other, with arms cut off at the elbows, stood against the paling surrounding a grave only three or four rods distant. Both Indians were practically in a nude condition, nearly every article of clothing having been stripped from them. They were frozen stiff, and their bodies had been horribly mutilated. Both had been scalped, apparently in genuine aboriginal style, but whether by white men, or an enemy belonging to the scalp-lifting fraternity, can only be surmised. Slices of flesh from different parts of their bodies had also been cut off and carried away as souvenirs. Each had an eye gouged out and an ear cut off, several fingers had somehow disappeared, and one was minus his nose. (A driver suggested he had evidently been poking his nose into other people's business.) The entrails of one were visible, representing the first prominent picture in most of the almanacs.

On this long and tedious journey we had been keeping a sharp watch for Indians for several hundred miles; still these were the first and only ones we had seen on the trip. We stopped a few minutes and surveyed the surroundings. The passengers, after making a thorough inspection, were unanimous in their belief that they were "good Indians." All hoped that, if any more of the "noble red men" were encountered on the trip, we would find them as quiet and peaceable as were these.

The only military post between Fort Sedgwick and Denver was Camp Wardwell, located about equidistant, near the mouth of Bijou creek, at what was known on the upper South Platte in staging and freighting days as "the Junction." The place was about 100 miles east of Denver, by the road along the South Platte, and was in plain view of the Rockies for at least 100 miles along the continental divide. Here there was a cut-off on which was a toll-road—built in the early '60's—which left the main-traveled river road and passed several miles south, along which the telegraph line from old Julesburg to Denver was constructed, in the fall of 1863, thus saving, it was claimed, from ten to fifteen miles over the old river road.

During the Indian troubles Wardwell became quite an important camp, a military officer being stationed here, who performed the duties of provost marshal as similar duties had been and still were being performed at Fort Kearney. The principal duties of the authorities were to keep people from proceeding without a minimum strength of thirty armed men, for safety against the redskins. There was a telegraph office at the Junction, which appeared to be indispensable, especially since the Indians had possession of several hundred miles of road along the Platte.

From Buffalo Springs to Denver, the journey was more severe than it had been on any previous stretch since we started out on the 16th from Cottonwood Springs. Every hour we moved forward on the road we were getting closer to the Rockies—steadily gaining a higher altitude. Snow to a considerable depth had fallen, the ground being covered from one to two feet all along the South Platte to the continental divide, a distance of fully 150 miles. This alone was enough to make our progress slow.

The most of the way from here in, our fare consisted of fried

RESULT OF A CONFLICT WITH THE INDIANS AT AMERICAN RANCH. *Page 379.*

bacon and hardtack, but it was a palatable diet. We were now without a regular cook, and, not being averse to good food myself, cooked into "square meals," I tendered my services for a few days before reaching our destination. I had had some experience in younger days flipping slapjacks, baking corn dodgers, and frying bacon and potatoes, and was unanimously detailed as a sort of "French cook," acting in that capacity for over 100 miles. With such solid substantials as hardtack and bacon to draw from, it is hardly necessary to say that a meal considerably different from the one like "your mother used to cook," twice and sometimes three times a day, was the result of my management of the culinary department; and it was my last trip by stage into the Colorado capital.

There was great rejoicing in Denver on my arrival there with the several weeks of mail that had been accumulating since the embargo put upon the overland line by Mr. Lo. Nearly all business in Denver for the time being, however, had ceased. The banks could do nothing with the Eastern cities, and every business man was cut off from points on the Missouri river where most of their purchases were made. But there had been no partiality shown. No one in Denver had been getting letters.

There was unusual activity among the stage company's officials in Denver who were making the necessary preparations to reopen the overland route to Atchison. Stages were coming every day from California and Salt Lake. A heavy mail for the East from Utah and Colorado had been accumulating for several weeks at the Denver post-office, and the first stage-coach, with a load of passengers, was started out for Atchison on March 1. At ten o'clock on the morning of the 2d the second coach departed. This was a big Concord, loaded with mail, and, in addition, there were seven passengers, besides the driver and myself. It was the largest mail I ever accompanied between the Rockies and the Missouri river.

The journey for the first nine miles out was necessarily slow and tedious, on account of the road in many places being drifted full of snow. Like Jordan, it was a "hard road to travel," with no sign of a track in sight. We got along as well as could be expected under the circumstances, and ate supper that night at Living Springs, thirty-five miles down the toll-road, and then continued eastward. The wind was blowing quite hard, the night was dark, and the atmosphere cool and disagreeable. The snow was over a foot deep on the level, and still no sign of a broken track, owing to the suspension of all travel for some time previous, because of the Indian depredations.

We had not gone over ten miles from Living Springs before we realized we were lost. We were on the sandy, treeless plains, and no landmarks were in sight. The team had wandered away from the telegraph line. There was not a fence for hundreds of miles along the stage road. It was so dark we could n't see the mountains west of us, usually visible four or five times the distance. To add to our discomfort, the team had wandered from the road, and, as we ascertained later, were making a circle. The driver, realizing that something was wrong, stopped, and a consultation was held. One of the coach lamps was lighted, and three persons, including myself, volunteered to hunt the road. It was like hunting for a "needle in a haymow"; it was found, however, but not until after an hour's search, nearly a mile away. With a pocket compass I always carried, the discovery was also made that the team, when stopped, was headed towards Denver. After turning around, and in due time getting into the road, once more we moved off in the direction of the Missouri river, but were obliged to travel slowly all night—not going out of a walk—on account of the deep snow.

It was daylight on the morning of the 3d when we reached Bijou ranch. All of us being thoroughly chilled, we went into the house, stood before the fire-place, and tried to thaw out. I had had a fearful, outdoor, all-night ride, with a cold northwest wind. It was impossible to get warm with the accommodations in sight. This ranch, located on the cut-off toll-road, was noted for being one of the coldest on the overland route; but there was a good fire in the grate, and, while almost roasted on one side, the wind whistling through the cracks in the building nearly froze us on the other side. We tarried here an hour, while the team was feeding; thence proceeded on the journey, reaching Junction ranch at eleven o'clock the next morning. Here we prepared our own breakfast, and there was a grand rally around the substantial spread, which consisted of hardtack, bacon, slapjacks, and coffee. Nearly eighteen hours had passed since we had eaten, and seldom was anything on the plains relished more.

At noon we proceeded, with a fresh team, and soon caught up with, and joined, a coach full of passengers that left Denver twenty-four hours ahead of us. Junction was ninety miles from Denver, at the east end of the cut-off toll-road, and here we were furnished with a mounted escort of four boys belonging to the Colorado militia. One of the drivers jokingly suggested that an extra escort ought to be sent along to protect the mounted boys, none of whom were out of their 'teens.

All went well as we journeyed down the South Platte; but it was a glorious sight during the day to meet, about midway between Junction and Godfrey's ranch—since supplies were getting short in Denver—a train of 165 wagons loaded with groceries, provisions, etc., bound for the coming city near the eastern base of the Rockies.

We reached Godfrey's at five o'clock on the second day after leaving Denver, and here stopped a little over sixteen hours. On leaving this ranch, at nine o'clock on the morning of the 4th, we had an escort of ten mounted soldiers. All the regular stage stations and a great many buildings belonging to the ranchmen in the valley had been destroyed by the Indians, and the overland route presented a sad and gloomy appearance.

We stopped that evening for supper and stayed all night at Washington ranch, where a meal was prepared in good style. There was no unnecessary or special ceremony indulged in at this place, but when "grub" was ready an invitation was given to "pitch in," and all did so like a pack of hungry wolves, helping ourselves to the ample supply of substantials nicely prepared and spread before us.

The result of the immense traffic to Denver and other Western frontier points in 1863 and 1864 was the opening up, by wide-awake fellows, of a large number of new ranches and trading posts along the Platte between Fort Kearney and the mountains. One of the largest and most conspicuous of the buildings erected was Washington ranch, kept by the widely known and popular Moore brothers. The place operated by the Moores was on the south side of the road some forty-odd miles west of old Julesburg, a few miles east of American ranch. The Washington soon became well and favorably known. It was a comparatively new building, commodious, and well constructed of sod. The walls were massive, and inside the building was filled with an immense stock of goods, of the kinds usually kept on sale at different trading places

A NEW STYLE HOWITZER, USED AT WASHINGTON RANCH. *Page 386.*

along the overland route. It was a very popular stopping-place for pilgrims and freighters, the boys being extensive stock-raisers, and one of them (James A. Moore) having been a daring rider on the famous pony express.

During the troubles along the Platte in 1864 and 1865, the proprietors and employees of the Washington were besieged, and held out for four days against a superior number of the redskins. A happy thought in the way of a joke suddenly came to them. They took an earthenware churn, mounted it on wheels near their premises, and watched the result. The ingenious contrivance had the appearance of being a genuine howitzer, mounted in such a way as to shell the skulking red devils for a long distance in every direction. It is hardly necessary to say that for some time the "howitzer" had the effect of being a sort of peacemaker in that vicinity. Of course it was out of the question to fire a single shot from the ugly-looking "gun"; nevertheless it looked like a regular "dog of war," and answered all the purposes which its clever originators had intended. It frightened the prowling savages, and for some time thereafter, though frequently seen a long way off, they were careful to keep a safe distance from the premises—out of range of the "howitzer."

While staying there on my last trip across the plains by the overland stage, I slept all night on my buffalo robe, covered with my blankets, on the ground floor. It was a short time after the Indian depredations in that vicinity. During the evening I was not a little interested in listening to the Moores while they narrated to the stage boys and passengers some of the daring adventures that had recently taken place near by, and in which engagement they had been prominent participants.

In this fierce encounter the Moores and their party were besieged and fought a large band of savages for four days. They lost several hundred head of cattle and one of the men received a bullet in the back of his neck—from the wound of which he was suffering—still he was the same genial, good natured fellow he had always been, and jokingly remarked that he was ready for another brush with the murderous scalp-lifters.

It was Sunday, March 5, when we arose early at the Washington, after sleeping on the ground floor all night, and sat down to a good breakfast at daylight. At six o'clock the two coaches, filled with passengers, were on their way down the Platte. We camped at noon near Harlow's ranch, at a delightful spot on the bank of the river, fed the stock, and, sitting on the ground, partook of a cold lunch, consisting of boiled beef, sardines, cheese, bread, crackers, etc. At one o'clock we were again on the move. The day was lovely, the sun shining brightly, and a gentle south breeze made everything pleasant.

After a twelve hours' journey we reached old Julesburg at six P. M., the stages having made fifty miles during the day. The team hauling the mail coach on which I was riding had been driven all the way from the Junction, 100 miles. The Indians had not left a house standing between Moore's and Julesburg, and desolation was visible on all sides. There were a number of places along the road with ledges of rock where skulking Indians could hide, and it was necessary to "keep our eyes peeled." It was one of the most dismal portions of the overland road, since all the buildings had been burnt, and a guard of ten mounted cavalrymen, having been detailed, accompanied mail and passengers during the entire fifty miles.

We sat down to a good supper at old Julesburg about dark; thence proceeded east with the mail, accompanied by an escort of five soldiers from Fort Sedgwick. The other coach with its passengers remained at Julesburg over night. We kept a close watch the entire night for Indians but saw none. The line had been restocked from Julesburg east since my trip west, and the drivers changed horses at every station during the night's run. The resumption of traffic on the plains was noticed during the night's drive, for a train of 180 wagons loaded with all kinds of supplies was met, camped at Beauvais ranch.

At daylight on the morning of the 6th we reached Alkali station and breakfasted, getting away at half-past six, but took no escort. We naturally felt a little shaky while going over O'Fallon's Bluffs, but saw nothing to frighten us. At noon we partook of a "cold snack" at Fremont Springs, and reached Cottonwood Springs at five P. M. for an early supper. The weather all day had been delightful, but there was a sudden change about dark, the wind whipping squarely around into the north and blowing a cold blast, making it extremely disagreeable for traveling on the outside of the stage-coach.

Except for the wind it was a beautiful night, for the moon was shining brightly, enabling us to see for a considerable distance in every direction. It was just the right kind of a night for skulking bands of Indians, and naturally there was not a little anxiety. The road in the Platte valley was never in better condition. Only a short time before there had been a raid by Indians in the vicinity. Before leaving Cottonwood Springs, we had talked over the troubles with the military authorities at Fort McPherson, and, learning what we could, decided to go ahead without asking for a guard. Every man on the stage, however, except the driver, held his gun in his hand all night, believing that if the Indians thought they could take the party unawares they might sneak around, attack the coach at some of their strongholds, and perhaps make it decidedly warm for us.

It was near the hour of midnight, and we were going east at a pretty fair gait, when suddenly we were startled by parties in a wagon calling on us to stop. We did so, and learned from them that at the place where they were camped a party of Indians had passed a short time before, having a human scalp dangling from the point of a spear and yelling at the top of their voices.

In the wagon was a small family, and all appeared to be greatly frightened. They had heard and recognized the rumbling of the approaching stage-coach for some distance, as its ponderous wheels rolled along the hard road that cool, stilly night. No sound of a vehicle ever seemed so pleasant to them. They lost no time hitching up, and then traveled in the rear of our loaded Concord to Plum Creek, one of the prominent stations, where they felt they would be assured of military protection. It was four o'clock in the morning when they arrived there, the team being almost used up in the efforts of the frightened party to keep up with the stage, which was making too fast time for them.

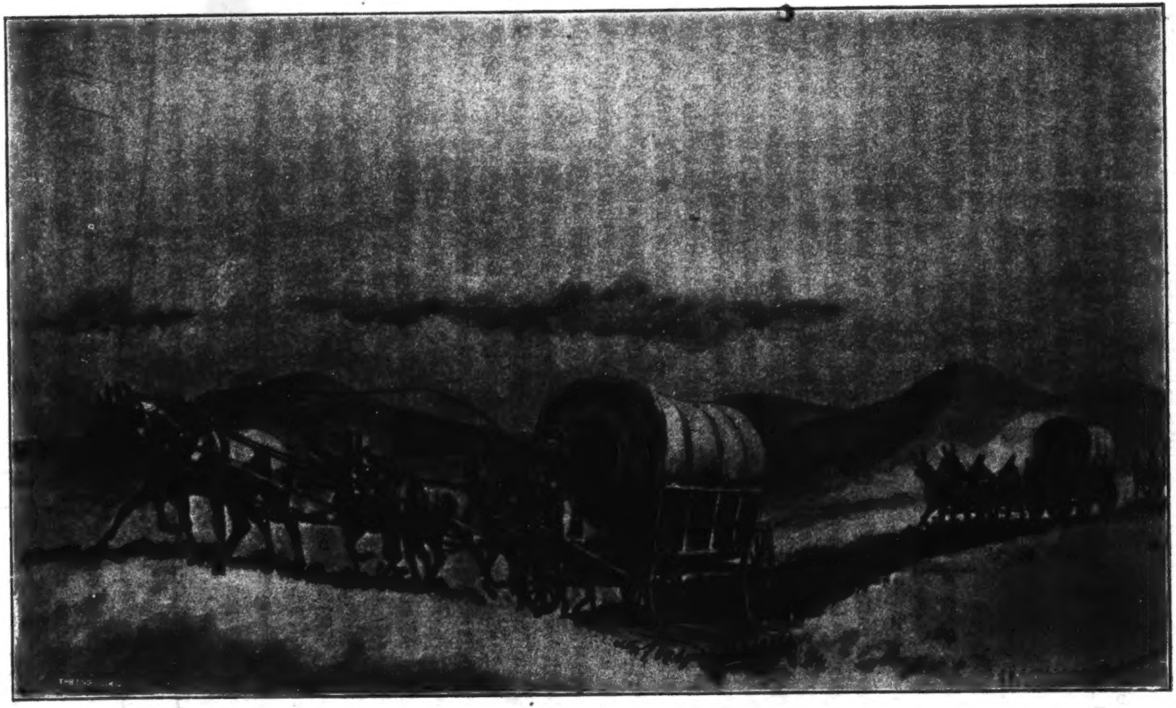
Reaching Fort Kearney at half-past nine o'clock, after an all night's ride of 100 miles, we ate breakfast. It was thirty-five miles from Fort Kearney to Pawnee Ranch—a new station near the Little Blue river—where we had supper. Little of special interest occurred during the balance of the run to Atchison, where we arrived at eight o'clock on the morning of the 10th.

Going over a portion of the route both ways the journey was as slow and tedious as it was exciting and dangerous, particularly along the Platte valley west from Cottonwood Springs. The trail was in an Indian country, and we were obliged to pass through the very heart of the most hostile section of it. For months a considerable portion of the region adjacent had been fairly alive with skulking savages. On portions of the road had been enacted some of the worst atrocities known in Indian warfare.

The five stages composing the train escorted from Alkali station west by a cavalcade were the first coaches that had gone over that section for several weeks. We all were aware that bands of Indians were hiding in the cañons and along the bluffs south of the road watching us, and it was necessary to keep constantly on the lookout, each person carrying a breech-loading rifle in his arms, fearing we might at any moment be suddenly confronted—possibly surrounded—by overwhelming numbers of the savages.

We found nearly all the stations for over 300 miles were wiped out. Many of the cabins and trading posts of the ranchmen had been pillaged. Desolation stared as we moved along up the Platte. Knowing what had already occurred, we knew there was nothing in the annals of Indian butcheries too horrible for the infuriated demons to commit. In the vicinity of old Julesburg, particularly, destruction more plainly marked the bloody trail of the savages. It was only the month before that the inhabitants near the old town had fortunately been rescued from a horrible death by Captain North, who, pursuing a band of twenty-eight of the red devils, finally engaged them. A desperate battle took place, and at the close of the fight not a single "hair-lifter" was left to tell the tale. This band, it was learned, was only a small part of the force under Red Cloud, who only a few days before had met and attacked Lieutenant Collins, with fourteen men, massacring the entire party.

I shall never forget that last overland stage ride. Nearly five weeks elapsed from the time I left Atchison, on the 7th of February, to the 10th of March, while making the round trip. The anxiety was very great. Many hardships were encountered; still there were a number of pleasant recollections both going and returning. However, I never want to make another such trip. Most of the delays were in going out; for, on account of the Indian depredations, the stages were held six days at Cottonwood Springs. The time consumed on the return trip was seven days and twenty-two hours; still, taking into consideration all the disadvantages and vexatious delays connected with the journey, it was one of the quickest ever made between the mountains and the "Big Muddy."



BUTTERFIELD OVERLAND DESPATCH FAST-FREIGHT LINE. *Page 397.*

CHAPTER XVII.

SMOKY HILL ROUTE—BUTTERFIELD'S OVERLAND DESPATCH.

ONE of Denver's leading business men in the early '60's was D. A. Butterfield, engaged in the grocery and commission trade. Butterfield left Denver in the latter part of June, 1864, and took up his residence in Atchison, Kan., then one of the most prosperous towns on the Missouri river. He embarked in the commission business in a large stone warehouse fronting on the levee and Second street, opposite the old Massasoit House, at the foot of Main street. He was agent, also, for a line of packets that made semiweekly trips on the Missouri river between St. Louis and Atchison, their names being the *Marcella*, *Isabella*, *Clara*, and *Paragon*. At that time there were no railroads on Kansas soil, and steamboats on the "Big Muddy" did most of the transportation of freight from St. Louis to Kansas.

In the fall after his location at Atchison, Butterfield conceived a scheme that soon afterwards developed into a gigantic undertaking. He had formed an extensive acquaintance in Denver and other Colorado towns and mining camps, and it was his ambition, knowing the vastness of the commerce of the plains, to be at the head of some great enterprise connected with the overland route. The route up the Kansas river and Smoky Hill fork was the one he had marked out, because it was practically an air-line from Atchison to Denver; it was known that it would save at least fifty miles in distance; but not until the summer of 1865 was the Smoky Hill route opened for traffic. It had for a long time been known to be the shortest way across the plains from the Missouri river to Denver, but on account of frequent raids by hostile Indians, with practically no protection afforded by Government, there was little if any travel that way prior to the opening of the route by D. A. Butterfield.

An effort was made in June, 1860, by an expedition sent out from Leavenworth, to open up for traffic a short route *via* the Smoky Hill. The expedition returned the following September and reported. By this report it was shown that a feasible route could be had to Denver in a distance of 606 miles; in other words, the proposed route shortened the distance about seventy-five miles, as compared with the route that was then being traveled from Leavenworth *via* Fort Kearney and the Platte.

Before the opening of the Smoky Hill route there was only one direct line across the plains to Denver. It was a long, tedious ride for Kansas passengers to get from the Missouri river to the mountains in the later '60's, after the stages were withdrawn on that portion of the overland route between Atchison and Fort Kearney. Necessity, on account of the increasing traffic, compelled the establishment of another line, making two routes of travel from the Missouri river to Colorado, Salt Lake, and California. One route was by steamboat up the Missouri river to Omaha; thence by rail over the Union Pacific to Kearney; thence by stage along the south bank of the Platte, on the great overland highway to the foot-hills of the Rockies. The other route—the last one opened to Denver—was the "short line," *via* the Kansas river and the Smoky Hill fork.

The cost of the journey to the mountains *via* Omaha and the Platte was considerably in excess of that over the new "Smoky" route, and it took a day or two longer to make the trip. Passengers from Kansas were not long in finding this out. During the '60's fully one-half of the business and professional men in Denver were made up of citizens from Kansas and western Missouri, the largest number from any one place at the time being from Atchison, though there were many from Leavenworth.

In the spring of 1865 an advertisement in the Atchison *Daily Free Press*, announced the new enterprise, as follows:

BUTTERFIELD'S OVERLAND DESPATCH,
to all points in
COLORADO, UTAH, IDAHO, AND MONTANA
TERRITORIES.
Principal Office, Atchison, Kan.

—o—

NEW YORK OFFICE,
No. 1 Vesey Street, Astor House.

—o—

Through Bills of Lading Given From
New York, Boston, Philadelphia,
Pittsburg, Chicago, St. Louis,
and Burlington, Iowa.

—o—

D. A. Butterfield, Proprietor,
Atchison, Kans.
A. W. Spalding, Gen'l Ag't, New York.

In addition to what appears in the advertisement, the object of the "Overland Despatch" was, to control the bulk of the vast traffic of the plains; in short, to transport merchandise and all kinds of freight from the Missouri river to Denver and other towns in Colorado; also to supply the rich mining camps then being developed in the territories of the great Northwest.

Butterfield, as all who knew him had to admit, was a shrewd, indefatigable worker. He was untiring in his efforts to succeed in the new enterprise he had inaugurated. He had his Eastern headquarters in New York city, with large, attractive signs—one of them a train of mammoth white-covered prairie-schooners drawn by several spans of mules and five or six yoke of oxen, painted in genuine Western style, and put up in a conspicuous place near the Astor House. The signs could be seen from quite a distance, and drew the attention of thousands of men prominent in business circles from all parts of the country then sojourning in New York. The home or Western office of the "Despatch" was at Atchison, the western terminus of the only railway reaching across the country to the Missouri river and the eastern border of Kansas. Atchison was likewise the headquarters and starting-point for the great overland California mail.

A complimentary visit was given Butterfield at his residence on the evening of June 7, 1865, by the employees of the "Overland Despatch," when a beautifully engraved golden tablet, in honor of the originator of the great enterprise, was given him. On one side was engraved a representation of an ox train loaded with merchandise for the plains, with the words encircling it: "Butterfield Overland Despatch; established by D. A. Butterfield, Esq., 1865." On the other side were the words: "Presented to D. A. Butterfield by his employees, in token of their estimation of him as a man and an employer." A banquet followed, and speeches were made by Col. Isaac E. Eaton, Judge Albert H. Horton, and others. The program wound up with dancing, which was kept up until morning.

The direct route chosen by Butterfield was out of Atchison in a southwesterly direction to Grasshopper Falls,* where the Grasshopper river was crossed; thence over the rolling prairies, where the route intersected the old Fort Riley military road a few miles northeast of Topeka, traversing it, and crossing Soldier creek about three miles northwest of Topeka, at the then prosperous town of Indianola. Here the stages stopped and changed mules at the Clinton House.[*] Thence it continued westward up the Kansas river, *via* Silver Lake, St. Mary's, and Manhattan, to Fort Riley and Junction City. It was first operated by wagon-trains hauled by mule and ox teams. The wagons were loaded with various kinds of merchandise, mills, mining machinery, etc., for points in Colorado, Utah, and Montana. So successful did everything appear for building up a mammoth business on the plains—especially in Denver, which was so rapidly growing—that it was not long until the new short route was equipped with a line of four-horse stage-coaches.

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*Since changed to Valley Falls by act of the Kansas legislature of 1875. The name of Grasshopper river was subsequently changed to Delaware.

Ruins of the Clinton House, at Indianola, Kan., a station on the Butterfield Overland Despatch route in 1865.[*]

It was not known how much money Butterfield was worth at the time, but he was believed to be a rich man, for he was assessed a short time afterward for a Government income tax at $74,400. It was plainly evident, however, in spite of his snug fortune, that he was not lacking in the matter of "cheek." He was a smooth talker, could almost always interest his listeners, was exceedingly ambitious, and had few equals as a successful organizer. He managed in some way to interest a good deal of Eastern capital; not the least of which was that of three prominent express companies—the United States, the American, and the Adams. Steadily the scheme on which he was quietly working ripened, and, early in the summer of 1865, most of the various preliminaries connected with the enterprise were well matured. At first it was intended to transport freight only, by mule and ox trains; but the prospects of the undertaking being unusually bright, and everything connected with it appearing so promising, it was decided to put on a line of four-horse stages. The coaches were to run through to Denver, special efforts being made for carrying passengers and express matter. Suitable stations were to be located on the line, averaging about fifteen miles apart.

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[*] This old, two-story building, erected in the later '50's or early '60's, is still standing, and is now used as a barn on the farm of W. W. Phillips, one of the Kansas free-state pioneers and early citizens of Topeka.

Dave Butterfield, as he was known, from his several years' residence in Denver in the early days of that city, with his extensive acquaintance among the business men and prominent mining representatives in that section, and with the bright future prospects of the "Pike's Peak Mining Region," evidently imagined that he could give Ben. Holladay, the New York millionaire overland stage proprietor, a lively tilt in the transportation of passengers and express across the plains to Denver.

It could not be disputed that Butterfield had the advantage of a route to the Rocky Mountains considerably shorter—across the country a little south of west from Atchison to Manhattan and Junction City, and up the Kansas valley and along the Smoky Hill fork—than Holladay had *via* the Little Blue river, Fort Kearney, and the Platte valley. His staging business he proposed to confine exclusively to the transportation of passengers and express, while Holladay had a great prestige—the monopoly in carrying the overland mail at good, round figures.

The exact route across the plains had not yet been mapped out, except that it had been decided to follow the Smoky Hill fork if, after a thorough investigation, it proved feasible. Accordingly an expedition was sent out in the summer of 1865 to determine the practicability of the Smoky Hill route, for the new Butterfield Overland Despatch. The expedition fitted out was in charge of Col. Isaac E. Eaton, of Leavenworth, who, after making a careful survey of the entire route, sent in the following telegram:

"DENVER, August 7, 1865.

"*To D. A. Butterfield, Supt. B. O. D. Co., Atchison, Kan.:* Expedition a perfect success. Best road from the Missouri river to the mountains. Living water every five miles, except from the head of Smoky Hill to Sand creek—twenty-one miles. Grass and wood abundant the whole route. Distance from Leavenworth to Denver, 585 miles. Shall I arrange for building stations from here? ISAAC E. EATON."*

Large sums of money were lavishly spent by Butterfield in the spring of 1865 advertising his new enterprise, through the leading newspapers in New York, Chicago, St. Louis, Atchison, Denver, and Salt Lake. His Atchison homestead, on Fifth street, comprised a block of ground, and he lived in sumptuous style. He gave frequent "swell" parties, to which were invited most of the "upper tens," the city officials, and prominent merchants and business men of Atchison. At these banquets the choicest wines and sparkling champagnes flowed like water, and the finest cigars were smoked by his guests. For anything that could be done to increase notoriety he spared neither pains nor expense.

Evidently the idea of Butterfield was to make it appear in the eyes of the masses that the "B. O. D." was a gigantic enterprise, backed with unlimited capital. It was thought by many around Atchison who knew the man well, and who found it difficult to collect even small bills against the concern, that there was really more "wind" connected with the head of the outfit than there was ready money to back it. It was short-lived. Dave Butterfield was a very different character from his New York namesake, John Butterfield, who established the southern or original "Butterfield Line" of stages, as has already been mentioned, between St. Louis and San Francisco.

It took money—and lots of it, too—to equip and put in operation such a vast enterprise as the "Overland Despatch" promised to become. Everything now appeared to be ripe for it. It was talked about all over the country. It was one of the leading topics at the breakfast and dinner tables. The leading newspapers had column after column about it, and it was discussed in all circles. Butterfield went to New York and Boston and laid his plans before prominent capitalists of the two cities. He was highly successful in his efforts, for the company was reorganized in June, 1865, and capitalized at three million dollars, with one-

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*In building this Smoky Hill route Colonel Eaton had a heavy military escort; hence met no difficulties in getting through. The Atchison *Daily Free Press* spoke of the enterprise at the time as follows:

"We must say that we admire Butterfield's pluck. Croakers on the Missouri river, skeptics in Denver and secret vindictive enemies who proposed 'to fight the thing to death' have produced no effect upon the master mind of this new and immense overland enterprise. Succeed it will, and such a triumph would warrant any man in fostering a feeling of pride for the work accomplished."

half paid in. Branch offices were opened, and agents appointed in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Chicago, Atchison, Leavenworth, Denver, and Salt Lake City.

E. P. Bray, one of the leading express men in the country, was chosen president, and W. K. Kitchen treasurer, both wealthy residents of New York. D. A. Butterfield, of Atchison, was made superintendent and manager. John A. Kinney, an old-timer and pioneer business man of Atchison, who had been with Butterfield almost from the first opening of the "Despatch" headquarters, was continued in charge of the Atchison office and his salary raised from $1500 to $2500 a year. Mr. Kinney was known to be an expert accountant, and no man in Atchison was better fitted, by long business experience west of the Missouri river, for this trying and responsible position. He had complete supervision of the mammoth enterprise, and, single-handed, could do the work of three ordinary men.

On the 30th of June, 1865, there appeared in the Atchison *Free Press* a column advertisement, the contents of which were as follows:

> **BUTTERFIELD OVERLAND DESPATCH,**
>
> **To All Points in**
>
> **Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, Idaho and Montana Territories and the State of Nevada.**
>
> **Contracts can be made with this Company through their Agents, to Transport Freight from all of the Eastern Cities, to all localities in the Territories, the rate to include Railroad and Overland carriage and all commissions upon the Missouri River.**
>
> **The Company owns its own transportation and gives a through Bill of Lading which protects the shipper from the extreme East to the Far West.**
>
> **EXPRESS DEPARTMENT.**
>
> **About August 1, 1865, the Company will have a line of Express Coaches running daily between Atchison, Kansas, and Denver, Colorado; and, about September 1, to Santa Fe, New Mexico, and, as soon in the spring as possible, a tri-weekly between Denver and Salt Lake City, over which merchandise will be carried at fair express rates.**
>
> **TIME TO DENVER, EIGHT DAYS.**
>
> **Mark Goods for Cattle and Mule Trains "But'd Ov'd Desp'h." Mark Goods for Express "B. O. D. Express, Atchison."**

The wagon-trains and stage-coaches of the B. O. D. Company went out from Atchison *via* Grasshopper Falls and the defunct town of Indianola to St. Mary's, Manhattan, and Junction City;

thence westward up the Smoky Hill fork. The distance from Atchison *via* Junction City to Denver by this route, as the new short line was then operated, was 592 miles, or sixty-one miles less than the old route traveled from Atchison by the Little Blue, Fort Kearney, and Platte valley.

Some changes were made in the location of the route after it was first established. Following are the names of stations and table of distances, as permanently located by the Butterfield Overland Despatch Company; those marked with a (*) are "home" or eating stations:

FROM ATCHISON AND LEAVENWORTH TO—

	Miles.
Fort Riley	116
Junction City*	3
Chapman's Creek	12
Abilene*	12
Solomon River	10
Salina*	13
Spring Creek	15
Ellsworth*	14
Buffalo Creek	12
Hick's Station*	15
Fossil Creek	15
Forsythe's Creek	11
Big Creek*	11
Louisa Springs	12
Bluffton	14
Downer*	13
Castle Rock Creek	9
Grannell Spring	11
Chalk Bluffs	12
Monument*	13
Smoky Hill Spring	11
Eaton*	12
Henshaw Creek	13
Pond Creek*	11
Willow Creek	14
Blue Mound	9
Cheyenne Wells*	13
Dubois*	24
Grady's	11
Connell Creek*	13
Coon Creek	12
Hogan	11
Hedinger's Lake*	9
Big Bend of Sandy	13
Reed's Springs*	13
Bijou Creek	12
Kiowa Creek	9
Ruthton*	9
Cherry Valley	16
Denver*	14
Total distance	592

Anticipating the early completion of the Kansas Pacific railway up the Kaw valley to Junction City, the stage stations from that point to Denver were numbered. Junction City was number 1; sixteen miles west was Hersey's, No. 2; sixteen miles farther, Solomon River, No. 3; Salina was fourteen and a half miles beyond, and was No. 4; Pritchard's (on Spring creek), fifteen miles, was No. 5; and Ellsworth, fifteen miles, was No. 6; and so on to destination, the stations averaging about fifteen miles. From No. 6 to Denver the distance was reported as 375 miles.

Some idea of the cost of operating an overland transportation line may be had when it is known that work oxen, in the summer of 1865, cost, in Atchison, $160 to $170 a yoke. The company bought for the line 1200 mules, the most of them being purchased in St. Louis, then (as now) believed to be the best mule market in the country. The first train sent out—a small one—was on June 24, 1865, and was known as "Train A." It was loaded with 150,000 pounds of freight for Denver and other Colorado points. On the 15th of July a train left Atchison for Colorado with seventeen large steam-boilers; and soon thereafter a train of six-mule wagons started for Virginia City, Mont., carrying 150,000 pounds of machinery, the freight on which was twenty-two and a half cents per pound. The parties in charge of this train expected to go through in eighty days.

The business of the new company was big from the start, and it continued to grow rapidly. Steamboats discharged great quantities of freight on the Atchison levee for shipment by the "Despatch" line. A large amount of stuff also came by railroad *via* St. Joseph. In one day during the month of July, 1865, nineteen car-loads of freight, consigned to the "B. O. D." at Atchison, were received for transportation by this line. Early in August that year a train was loaded with 600,000 pounds of merchandise for business men in Salt Lake City.

While the "B. O. D." enterprise was in operation on the Smoky Hill route, a vast amount of freight was transported by it from Atchison to Denver *via* Manhattan, Junction City, Salina, Fort Harker, Wallace, and Cheyenne Wells. During the summer of 1865 the route was equipped, also, for a triweekly passenger and express stage line, twenty good coaches bought in Chicago being the vehicles utilized. The first stage to leave Atchison by this route reached Denver on September 23, 1865. The general superintendent himself accompanied this coach. The people of Denver had the utmost confidence in Butterfield and his enterprise. They fairly worshiped him. He was met a few miles out by a delegation of prominent citizens—his old friends and former neighbors—headed by George T. Clark, Denver's popular young mayor. As might naturally be inferred, the "Despatch" man was given an enthusiastic welcome. He was transferred to a seat in a carriage and driven direct to the Planter's House, corner of Blake and Sixteenth streets, where, for a time, he was the hero of the hour. An impromptu meeting was held, enthusiastic speeches were made, and a royal reception, with a grand banquet, followed.

One of the early stages that left Atchison on the "B. O. D." line made the run across to Junction City, 119 miles, in twenty-two hours—a fraction less than five and one-half miles an hour, including all stops.

The Butterfield Overland Despatch line was not long in operation before it met with obstacles. Like the old, established Government highway, which followed along the south side of the Platte river, it was not spared raids by the Indians. The Smoky Hill route lacked the protection given on the great military highway which followed the Platte. A number of severe encounters with Indians were had along the new route. One of the fights took place between Chalky Bluffs station and Denver, in November, 1865, when it shortly became necessary to run the stages with a mounted guard in advance. Messengers were put on the stage line from the first, but it afterwards became so dangerous that all who valued their lives were finally compelled to quit. They were all competent, faithful, obliging young men. I was personally acquainted with each one. Among those employed in 1865 were J. C. Alderson, B. S. Barbour, A. S. Cole, Fred Merwin, William S. Moorhouse, Thad. Platt, and A. D. Stevens.

This new route was all right for wagon-trains, but it soon became a dangerous one for stages to travel. For a long distance it was beset with large numbers of hostiles. Young Merwin, one of the fearless and faithful messengers, had made two unsuccessful attempts to get his stage-coach through to Denver. Before starting again, and the last time, he made his will, stating this was his third attempt, and he was going with it through to Denver or die on the way. He was killed by the treacherous savages, but not until after one of the chiefs had come up and smoked with him the "pipe of peace."

Owing to the frequent troubles by the Indians on the Smoky Hill route, the uncertainty of traveling it, and the risk of life, the originator of the "Overland Despatch," whose company was daily becoming more financially embarrassed, was finally obliged to abandon it and retire. In the later '50's, practically the same route had been abandoned by the Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express Company, which was forced to move its stages, stock and supplies north to the Platte route, over which nine-tenths of all the travel across the plains then passed. The Platte route, the old military highway, in the early days of overland traffic, was deemed the only feasible road to Colorado and Utah; besides, at frequent intervals, it had protection from prowling Indians furnished by Government.

The wide-awake, public spirited citizens of Denver, most of whom were well acquainted with Butterfield and his new enterprise, continued to have the greatest faith in the future of the "Overland Despatch." Even when it seemed to be "on its last legs," the Colorado territorial legislature of 1865–'66 passed an act incorporating the enterprise, and, on the 30th of January, 1866, the incorporators met for organization. They mapped out their route west over the continental divide *via* Berthoud Pass, a portion of which line had been built by Gen. Bela M. Hughes, on which a large amount of money had been expended. Work on this road soon closed, and the proposed new short wagon and stage route across the Rockies was abandoned.

Preliminary arrangements were at once made for the early construction of a telegraph line from the Kansas and Colorado boundary to Central City. By a resolution, this company claimed the right to use Berthoud Pass, and the construction of the road west through it to Salt Lake was to be commenced at the earliest practicable date. Nothing more, however, than the mere passing of the resolution was ever done by the company, except to advertise, in February, 1866, for bids for the delivery, along the Smoky Hill route, of 6000 telegraph poles.

During the short time that it lasted, the "B. O. D." was widely known at all the ranches and points on the plains and in the mountains. Eastward, it was known in most of the leading cities from the Missouri river to the Atlantic coast. It soon, however, became apparent that, with the country so sparsely settled, but few of the mining camps having come into prominence, there was not business enough in the '60's, with the lively competition existing, to warrant an enterprise of such magnitude. While it continued under the management of Butterfield the organization cut largely into the receipts of the Holladay line and neither company made money on passengers or express matter. Passenger traffic decreased on account of the Indians. In March, 1866, there were rumors of a consolidation of the two companies, and, on the 17th of that month, the following advertisement appeared in the Atchison *Daily Free Press:*

> **NOTICE.**
>
> —o—
>
> **To the Employes of the**
> **OVERLAND DESPATCH COMPANY.**
>
> —o—
>
> **THE OVERLAND STAGE LINE and the OVERLAND DESPATCH COMPANY have become one property under the name of the "HOLLADAY OVERLAND MAIL AND EXPRESS COMPANY."**
>
> —o—
>
> **The new Company guarantees payment to the employes of the late Overland Despatch Co.**
>
> **An agent is now en route from New York to pay them.**
>
> **DAVID STREET,**
> **Gen'l Ag't "Holladay Overland Mail & Exp. Co."**
> **ATCHISON, KAN., March 17, 1866.**

The Smoky Hill line, which had for something over a year been operated by the Butterfield Overland Despatch Company under trying difficulties and at a heavy loss, was now the property of Ben. Holladay and, with his old overland stage line, was afterward known—as long as the great stage man owned it—as the "Holladay Overland Mail and Express Company."

With several years' experience in overland staging on the Platte route, Holladay and the managers of his line had learned a number of things after coming into possession of the new Smoky Hill line, and the two were consolidated. Passengers had long been in the habit of putting everything valuable they could on their persons, in order to lighten their "baggage," especially coin and gold dust, so they would not have to pay on excess at the rate of one dollar a pound. To prevent such practice, the new company issued an edict which, in black and white, stated that each adult passenger was allowed twenty-five pounds of baggage; but it was expressly understood by those going through as passengers "that neither gold dust, bullion, coin, bank or treasury notes could, under any circumstances, be carried under the designation of 'baggage.'"

The business that had been worked up was continued by the new company, but Butterfield, by this time, had become hopelessly embarrassed financially. He doubtless saw, after it was too late, that he could not successfully operate, without immense sums of money, the gigantic enterprise he had proposed to make of the "Overland Despatch." He tried every way possible to keep it going, but there was no improvement visible for the future. The longer he continued to operate it the deeper he became entangled in the meshes of financial misfortune. While in the midst of what seemed to be a prosperous freighting business, with many tons of ponderous boilers and machinery in transit to far-away camps, the mining bubble vanished. He then realized, as did the company he represented, the situation in which they were placed, and saw there was little if any hope of collecting freight bills that were accumulating on the machinery that was being transported. The only alternative was to unload it on the plains, and there it was left to rust out. Butterfield saw that he was financially ruined. His enterprise had collapsed. His fortune had been swept away. The stage stock, coaches, oxen, mules, wagons, supplies, etc., were bought by Holladay and consolidated with his overland line.

It was less than eighteen months from the first organization of the "Overland Despatch" until there was nothing left of it. Butterfield may have saved a little from the ruins, but he lost nearly everything he had, and bills against the company were still coming in from all quarters. In time the financial affairs were satisfactorily adjusted, and all who had claims were paid. In spite of his misfortune, Butterfield had many friends and admirers. Apparently there was no end to the schemes he originated and which at the time looked to be practicable. Leaving Atchison he located in Mississippi, where he some time afterward organized a railroad company. He met one of his old friends from Atchison at Memphis in 1873, and in conversation he told of a number of things he contemplated in the "Sunny South." One of them was a railroad scheme, which he regarded second only to his "Overland Despatch" in its palmiest days. He told what a big thing he had in Mississippi and how easy a matter it was to control the legislature of that state.

Leaving Mississippi, the originator of endless schemes settled at Hot Springs, Ark., where he built and operated a horse-car line, and was said to be prospering. But one day he evidently awoke the wrong passenger. He became involved in a quarrel with one of his employees, who, being called a "blankety-blank" name, brained him with a neck-yoke. And thus ended the career of one of the most widely known men who operated on the plains during the year 1865.

In connection with the early history of the "Despatch" company, and its subsequent reorganization in 1865, Butterfield was shrewd enough to associate with him some of the solid men of the country. Among them was William H. Fogg, a wealthy tea merchant of Boston; Eugene Kelley, a wealthy private banker of St. Louis; George E. Cock, a prominent capitalist of New York; and the president of the Park Bank, New York, also president of the "Despatch" company. The new company represented millions of capital and it stocked the line up in splendid style. Good stations were built, and in fact no expense was spared to thoroughly equip the route as a passenger and express line and fast ordinary freight line. Connected with the enterprise were a great number of mule and ox trains—twenty-six wagons to the train—and, but for the serious Indian outbreaks and lack of Government protection, it would have proved a formidable rival of the Holladay overland line. But, after the expenditure of over a million dollars, the latter part of the winter of 1865–'66 found them practically tied up, principally on account of Indian troubles.

The express companies doing business in the West and California had for years been pressing Holladay for through rates and a *pro rata* on express business; but he would not listen to them, and held them at bay on the east at the Missouri river, and on the west at Salt Lake City, Wells, Fargo & Co. having gained control of the old Overland Mail Company from Salt Lake to Sacramento. The express managers found they could make terms with the Butterfield Overland Despatch from the Missouri river to Denver. This would leave only the gap of 600 miles from Denver to Salt Lake City. They had threatened to fill in this gap by stocking a line themselves. As late as February, 1866, they had entered into no binding arrangement with the B. O. D. Company, but Holladay was afraid they would, and, this accomplished, they might carry out their threat to stock the line from Denver to Salt Lake and accomplish their purpose of a through line in opposition to the overland line of Holladay's.

Mr. Holladay quietly formed his plans; he instructed David Street, his general agent in the West, to send a competent practical stage man and a clerk over the line of the B. O. D. Company as passengers—not to make themselves or business known—and to make a careful examination of the property, its condition, and estimated value; in fact, as complete an inventory as possible under the circumstances. Mr. Street started them from Denver, and at the same time started for Atchison by the "Overland" line, where the parties were to meet him. They accomplished the object for which they were sent very successfully and made their report to Mr. Street, with which, under instructions, he immediately started to New York, and laid it before Mr. Holladay. The next day after his arrival in New York, Mr. Holladay received from the three great express companies—the American, United States, and Wells, Fargo & Co.—an identical note (or round robin, it might be termed), demanding a through rate and some division of territory or business, accompanied by the threat that, in case of a failure to comply, they would stock the gap in their lines, viz., between Denver and Salt Lake City. Mr. Holladay had just had time to fully acquaint himself with the report on the "B. O. D.," and, on receipt of the notes from the express companies, he arose, as if snuffing the battle and eager for the fray, and said: "Now, I am going to take the bull by the horns." He sent his private secretary to the president of the Park Bank (who was also president of the B. O. D. Company) with his compliments, and a request that he would take lunch with him at his office that they might talk over a business matter.

Holladay's office then was in William street, just off Wall street, and not far from Delmonico's Beaver Street restaurant. He told a clerk to go down there and order a fine lunch, with wines and cigars, to be served at his office. The bank president came on time, and Mr. Street says he can remember well Mr. Holladay putting the case to him. In stature he was a small man, and Mr. Holladay a large one; and the latter, in that domineering though pleasant manner of his, had crowded him up into a corner. Mr. Holladay said: "I want to see you about your 'Despatch' line"; and, continuing, said: "I know more about your line than you do yourselves." Then he told him of the report he had had made, and said: "You are out over a million dollars; and that is not the end of the expense or outlay. You can never get your money all back; if you do n't do something quickly you will be out a whole lot more. But," he continued, "I can get you out of it in better shape than any one else."

Then he laid his plans before the banker, and told him if he did anything he must know it immediately. The president promised to call his board together at once and give Mr. Holladay an answer by three P. M. By that time Mr. Holladay had an answer that they would carry out the deal on the line proposed. Then Mr. Holladay turned to his private secretary and said: "Answer those express companies, and tell them to stock and be d——." The secretary did not probably put it exactly in those words, but it was as emphatic as he could word it. When the express companies heard of the deal—that Holladay had bought out the B. O. D. Company—they realized that they had lost the game. This really paved the way for Holladay selling out the whole overland business to Wells, Fargo & Co.

The transfer of property by the B. O. D. Company to the Holladay Overland Mail and Express Company included a large number of oxen and wagons and mule teams and wagons—about 150 of those large "Santa Fé" wagons, (six yoke of oxen to the team), and about fifty large mule wagons (with six mules to the team), all in first-class condition, new and completely equipped, in trains of twenty-six wagons. This immense outfit was used profitably by Holladay in transporting supplies for the line; and afterwards, when Wells, Fargo & Co. had bought out the line and, in the spring of 1867, had taken a large Government freight contract for supplying the line of forts to the Big Horn country, viz., Fort Laramie, Fort Fetterman, Fort Reno, Fort Kearney, and Fort C. F. Smith, these trains formed the nucleus of the vast transportation outfit it was necessary to provide.

Wells, Fargo & Co., who some months afterwards bought of

Holladay the Smoky Hill line, lost heavily in operating it in 1867, when the Indians burnt a large amount of property, including the stations at Stormy Hollow, Lookout, Walker Creek, Lake, Downer, Chalk Bluff, White Rock, Castle Rock, and Carlisle. The cost of these several stations ranged from $500 to to $9000 each. At one of the stations—Big Creek—fifty-two horses were run off. The torch was applied to the stations for a distance of more than 100 miles, and at Lookout three men were butchered by the savages. The loss of stage property by Wells, Fargo & Co. on the Smoky Hill and Platte that year aggregated several hundred thousand dollars, including the horses and mules, stations, vehicles, harness, hay, corn, oats, household furniture, utensils, provisions, etc. Everything that the Indians could not take away with them was destroyed.

Wood was scarce along the Smoky Hill in 1867 and brought fabulous prices; $100 a cord was a common price. During the summer the Government purchased some in the vicinity which had been cut in the pineries above Denver and hauled over 200 miles. "Uncle Sam" paid for it as high as $112 a cord.

Work on the west end of the railroad in 1869 was also pushed eastward from Denver, the two gangs working towards each other with remarkable rapidity. The pioneer Kansas Pacific railway, built up the Kaw valley and Smoky Hill fork in the later '60's, was completed through the State of Kansas and on west to the Colorado capital, near the eastern base of the mountains, and opened for through traffic on the 15th of August, 1870.

Among the stage-drivers employed from time to time in the later '60's on the Smoky Hill route were the following:

Armstrong, Chas. F.
Ayers, J. M.
Betts, J. H.
Brown, Michael.
Bigerstoff, Robert.
Bullock, John.
Campbell, John.
Campbell, Thos. A.
Clark, Charles.
Clarke, J. R.
Craig, D.
Drake, Frank.
Fish, Ed.
Frazier, N. F.
Harper, Abe.
Hall, Robert.
Holbrook, Ed.
Harney, Thomas.
Hall, James.*
Hotchkiss, ——.
Kimball, H. L.
Kimball, H. M.
Milken, Robert.
Maloney, Dan.
McAfee, James.
Newkirk, T.
Owens, D. B.
Payne, Charles.
Pool, William.
Ralph, Leonard.
Sarsfield, Ed.
Scott, Andrew.
Stafford, Henry.
Senan, John.
Wadsworth, James.†

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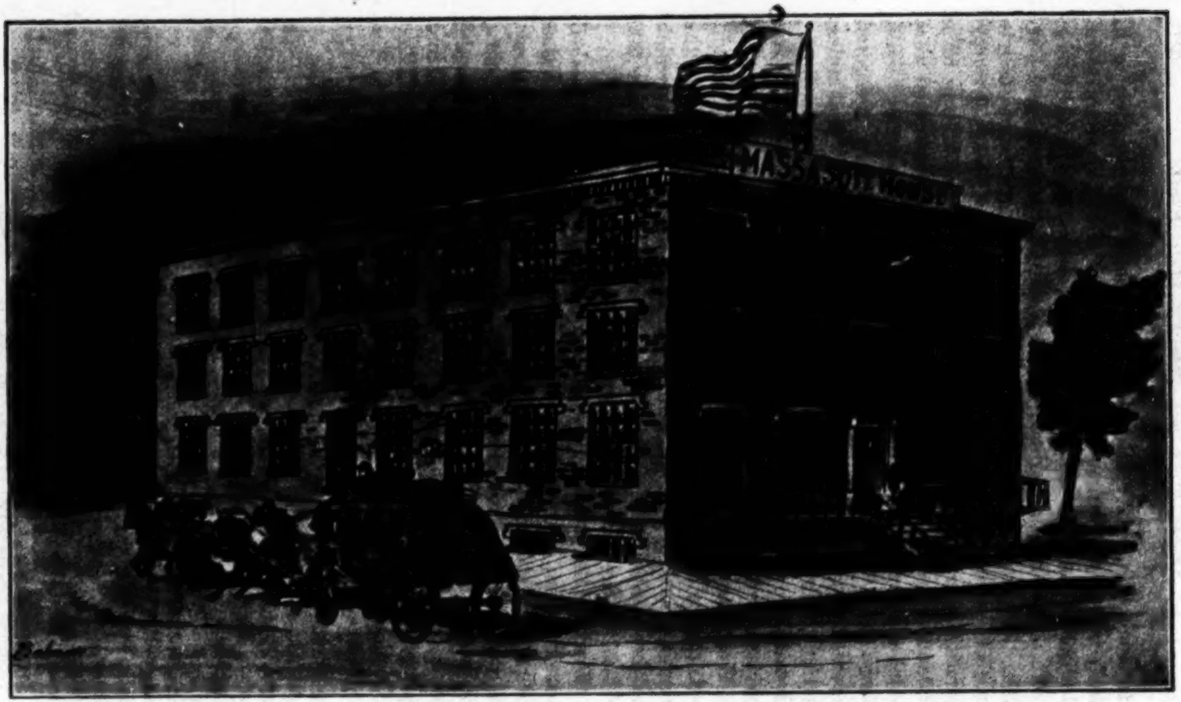
*Driver and assistant division agent.
†Killed by Indians in 1867 on Smoky Hill route.



WHERE ABRAHAM LINCOLN AND HORACE GREELEY STOPPED IN ATCHISON, IN 1859. *Page 424.*

CHAPTER XVIII.

RECOLLECTIONS OF EARLY ATCHISON.

IT was in November, 1858—over four decades ago—that I first set foot on the levee at Atchison. I stepped from the steamer *Omaha*, remaining in the town not more than half an hour, while the boat was discharging its cargo of freight at the foot of Commercial street. At that time the place was a small town when compared to the lively, bustling city of to-day. I took up my residence in Atchison the following spring, having this time come up the river, deck passage, on a steamboat from Weston, Mo., where I had been employed as a compositor a short time in the office of the *Platte Argus*. In going up the river I took deck passage for the reason that I did not have money enough to pay cabin fare. On landing I had a solitary dime in my pocket, and with this I bought a lunch—I had gone without my dinner—and then started out in search of work. A sign over the office which read "*Freedom's Champion*, John A. Martin, editor and proprietor," attracted my attention. It hung above the door of the only newspaper office in the city at that time, but preparations were being made by Gideon O. Chase, of Waverly, N. Y., for starting a new paper—the Atchison *Union* (democratic). Before retiring to bed that night, through the efforts of my friend Richard J. Hinton, who had known me in Lawrence and Quindaro a year or more, I succeeded in getting a situation in the *Champion* office, beginning work the following morning.

There were only a few hundred people in Atchison in the spring of 1859. In all, there were but four brick buildings on Commercial street; a part of the second story of one of them—the first brick, a half square west of the river—being occupied by the *Champion*. The Massasoit House, on the northwest corner of Main and Second streets, kept by that genial Irishman, Tom Murphy, was the leading hotel. The Planters', a two-story frame house, was a good hotel in those early days; but it was on the southwest corner of Commercial and Sixth streets—almost out in the suburbs. West of Sixth there were but few scattering dwellings and perhaps a dozen business houses and shops.

The road along Commercial street west of Sixth was quite crooked, for it had not been graded, and the street was full of stumps and remnants of a thick growth of underbrush that had previously been cut.* A narrow, rickety wooden bridge was spanning White Clay creek where that short but treacherous stream crosses Commercial, at Seventh street, over which stands the elegant office building erected by the late Senator John J. Ingalls, now in the heart of the city.

Between Sixth and Seventh streets, north of Commercial, was a frog pond, occupying most of the block, where the juveniles, with poles, used to push dog rafts in high water, and where the boys and girls utilizing it as a skating-rink in winter used to have lots of fun. The Exchange hotel, on Atchison street, between Second and the levee, built of logs—subsequently changed to the National—was the pioneer hotel of Atchison, and for more than a quarter of a century stood as one of the old, familiar landmarks built in early territorial days.

Atchison was the first Kansas town visited by Horace Greeley. It was on Sunday morning May 15, 1859, a few days before beginning his overland journey across the continent by stage. He came through Missouri by the Hannibal & St. Joseph railroad; thence down the Missouri river from St. Joseph on the *Platte Valley*, a steamer running to Kansas City in connection with trains on the Hannibal & St. Joseph railroad. Here it was, at the old Massasoit House, that Greeley wrote, on Kansas soil, his first letter to the *Tribune*. During the latter part of the afternoon he was driven over the city in a carriage, the editor of the *Champion* being one of the party. The city was a favorite place of Albert D. Richardson, the noted correspondent of five Eastern newspapers, as I frequently heard him say, as early as the fall of 1857, when he resided at Quindaro, and before taking up his residence at Sumner.

It was at Atchison that Abraham Lincoln, on his first visit to Kansas, spoke to a crowded house on the "Issues of the Day," in

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*Atchison was a dirty hole in the early '60's, before any macadamizing was done. John J. Ingalls, while doing editorial work on the *Champion* at that early period, frequently called the attention of the "city fathers" to the disgraceful condition of the streets. He characterized the city as a "hog-pen," and styled Commercial street as "a wallow for the vile brutes." The fact cannot be disputed that at times it was a *fearfully* muddy place. As late as the summer of 1865, the mud was so deep on the main thoroughfare of the city at the corner of Fifth street that a mule train going out of the city westward got stuck, and broke out the tongue of a wagon trying to get out of the mire.

the evening of December 2, 1859—the day that old John Brown was executed in Virginia. The noted "rail splitter" spoke in the Methodist church, which then stood on the hill at the corner of Fifth and Parallel streets. The little church was a frame building, dedicated in May, 1859, and overlooked a considerable portion of the city. The house afterwards became quite historic, for during the early part of the civil war the pastor, Rev. Milton Mahin, a staunch Union man, from Indiana, in a patriotic speech, soon after the civil war broke out, had the nerve and was the first minister of the Gospel in Atchison to raise the stars and stripes over his house of worship.

Atchison was the home of Samuel C. Pomeroy—one of the pioneers, its first free-state mayor, and when Kansas was admitted—January 29, 1861—he was chosen one of the first United States senators. He was chosen at the first session of the legislature, and, after holding the place twelve years, was then succeeded by another Atchison man, the brilliant John J. Ingalls. Mr. Ingalls lived three miles below, at Sumner, in the later '50's, but visited Atchison every two or three days, making his headquarters there in the spring of 1860. He practiced law for several years in Atchison, and held the important position of senator for eighteen years—from March 4, 1873, to March 4, 1891.

It was at Atchison that a party of "border ruffians" on the 6th of August, 1855, sent Rev. Pardee Butler, an earnest, outspoken free-state man and an abolitionist, adrift on a raft down the Missouri river.

It was also at Atchison that a party of pro-slavery men—hoping to receive a handsome reward—organized a posse and went into Calhoun (now Jackson) county, in December, 1858, to intercept old John Brown, who was camped there with a dozen or more negro slaves from western Missouri. The slaves had recently been liberated by Brown, who was going north with them by the "underground railroad" through Kansas and Nebraska, his destination being Canada.

In the early '60's Atchison was several times visited by a noted "jayhawker" named Cleveland. He was a fine looking, powerfully built man, standing over six feet in his stockings, and as straight as an Indian. He claimed to be a Union man, operating for the Government. While it was generally supposed that in his raids through the country he took property from the enemies of the Government only—avowed secessionists—in reality he finally became so bold and hardened in the work he was doing that he took property indiscriminately from friend and foe. He was, more than anything else, a genteel highway robber and desperado. It was not long until he became one of the most despised beings that ever set foot in the old town.

I remember well, during the fall of 1861, when he was supposed to be doing a valuable service for the Union cause, that the secessionists in Atchison were camping on his trail. He received his mail there when "jayhawking" in that part of Kansas. The post-office was located in a little one-story frame building on the south side of Commercial street, between Fifth and Sixth. The post-office building stood up on piles, several feet above the ground, where now stands a prominent building erected by Geo. W. Glick. I was employed in the office between two and three years as assistant postmaster and chief clerk, and slept there, while Colonel Martin, the postmaster, was off to the war. A number of times during that fall and the following winter I was aroused from my slumbers by Cleveland, who at that late hour of night always came around quietly to the side door to get his mail. He thanked me kindly always for getting up and accomodating him at such an unreasonable hour, and I became somewhat personally acquainted with him. Several times he offered to pay me for my trouble in crawling out of bed and giving him his mail, but I never made any charge for it or received a penny from him in return.

Some time later he appeared one morning on the street, when it was said that he dare not show his face in Atchison. The "home guards" heard of his presence and a squad from the "All Hazard" company quickly gathered and began drilling on Commercial street, at the corner of Fourth. Chas. Holbert was city marshal, and had charge of the squad. They were armed with guns of various descriptions which they had hurriedly picked up. The guards were composed largely of all classes of law-abiding citizens—numbering business and professional men—probably one-third of whom were, at heart, sympathizers of the Confederacy. It was known that Cleveland was in the city, and that in all probability there would be trouble in getting him out. While the guards were marching back and forth and going through the manual of arms, and while some other warlike demonstrations were being indulged in, the excitement began to grow more intense. Cleveland at the time was on his horse at the foot of Commercial street, near the Missouri river, but was watching and saw every move that was going on, and no doubt realized what it all meant. He at once galloped up the street where the squad was drilling and, with a long six-shooter in his right hand, he marched Holbert in front of him up the street for a few rods; then, seeing a big crowd gathering on all sides preparing to rescue the marshal, he struck the latter on the head with his revolver; then, putting the spurs to his charger, he made the quickest ride out of town ever before made by any living man. A few talked of mounting their steeds and pursuing the desperado, but by this time he was out of sight. He had one of the fastest horses in the country—a large, beautiful bay—and there was nothing in town that could get in gunshot of him. This all passed quicker than it takes to tell it. That was the last time the noted "jayhawker" and highway robber ever visited Atchison.

The first railroad built between the Mississippi and the Missouri rivers was the Hannibal & St. Joseph. It was completed across the State of Missouri to its destination and celebrated in St. Joseph on Monday, the 23d of February, 1859. While living at Quindaro, I saw the first two locomotives that came up the Missouri river on a steamboat. The names of the iron steeds were the Buchanan and St. Joseph. The name of the boat carrying the engines was the *Delaware;* it passed Quindaro about ten o'clock on Saturday, June 27, 1857. From the date of the opening of the Hannibal & St. Joseph road St. Joseph began to grow, and for a long time it was the liveliest and best city on the Missouri river. It was the farthest western point east of the Rockies then reached by the iron horse. Down the river it was a long distance to the western terminus of the Missouri Pacific, which was a little west of Jefferson City when I first came up the Missouri, on the steamer *New Lucy*, to Kansas, in April, 1857.

In the spring of 1860 four miles of track were laid opposite St. Joseph, between Elwood and Wathena. It was the first railroad built in Kansas; the initial rail being spiked down on the 20th of March. The first neigh of the iron steed in Kansas was from a train pulled over this line on the 19th of July, 1860, and the event was followed by a grand jollification.* The track, however, was soon taken up, and a railroad due west from St. Joseph was not a reality until 1870. The first train to run into Marysville from St. Joseph was in January, 1871 (now the Grand Island road), and from that date Marysville continued to grow until it has become one of the leading towns in northern Kansas.

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*See note at bottom of page 414.

Atchison had become quite a point for stage routes as early as 1859. A line of hacks ran daily from there to Leavenworth; another ran to Lawrence; and still another, *via* Oskaloosa and Grasshopper Falls, over the prairies and down across the Kaw river (to Lecompton, Big Springs, and Tecumseh) to Topeka—distance, seventy-two miles. This was a rather circuitous route, but was the nearest and easiest way to reach Topeka at that time. To get from Atchison to Lawrence in pioneer days, passengers were obliged to go around *via* Leavenworth, a distance of sixty miles, until a "short line" was opened *via* Mount Pleasant and Oskaloosa, reducing the distance to forty-five miles and the fare to only $4.50. There was a line north *via* Doniphan, Troy and Highland to Iowa Point. A line was also operated *via* Doniphan, Geary City and Troy to St. Joseph. Another line ran *via* Hiawatha to Falls City, Neb. A little later the old town had blossomed into the biggest staging center in Kansas. The most important route having its headquarters in Atchison was a four-mule line—the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express—which ran its elegant Concord stages across the plains twice a week. The Kansas Stage Company operated the line to Leavenworth, which passed through the rapidly decaying towns of Sumner and Kickapoo. A daily line, also operated by the Kansas Stage Company, ran to Junction City *via* Mount Pleasant, Winchester, Osawkee, Mount Florence, Indianola, Topeka, Silver Lake, St. Mary's Mission, Louisville, Manhattan, Ogden, and Fort Riley. The distance by this route was 120 miles; fare, ten dollars.

On this route a change of teams was made on the site of the old historic Hickory Point battle-field, and here passengers for Topeka and points up the Kaw Valley dined at "Old Man Lowe's." Lowe was one of the early Southern pro-slavery men in Kansas, and naturally took a prominent part in the noted "battle," fight-

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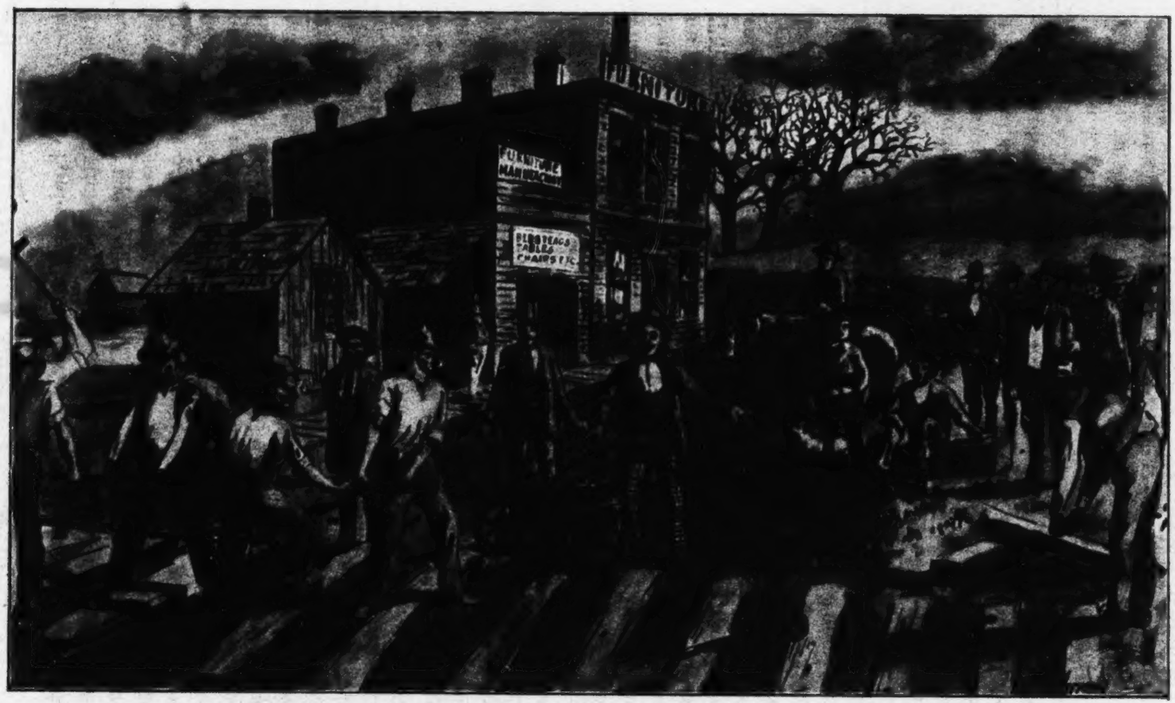
NOTE.—Nehemiah Green of Kansas, was a guest at the jollification held on the 19th of July. While waiting at the hotel in St. Joseph, Governor Brown, of Missouri, was momentarily expected as the city's guest. A number of people went into the hotel and shook hands with Green, calling him Governor Brown. Finally it became necessary for the gentleman from Kansas to rise and explain himself. He did so as follows: "Gentlemen, I will admit that Brown is green and that I am not Brown."



FIRST TRACK-LAYING ON THE ATCHISON & PIKE'S PEAK RAILROAD. *Page 413.*

ing with the border ruffians against the free-state men in 1856. His eating station was a plain one-story log building, and overlooked a large scope of country with much picturesque scenery. Guests were hospitably entertained here during the days of staging between Atchison and Topeka, and the old log house became a favorite stopping place. Mrs. Lowe used to get up some splendid meals, making most delicious coffee, frying prairie-chicken, bacon, and doughnuts, and baking corn dodgers in a style that could not be excelled by the most experienced Yankee cook. While the stage passengers for several years dined at the house, it was always a pleasure to listen to Lowe; when asked to "tell all about it," he would relate some of the more important incidents connected with the siege of the old town, in 1856. In the engagement it became necessary for the free-state men to bring up their old historic cannon and drop a few shots; finally to push a load of hay against the building and set fire to it, as a last resort, in their efforts to dislodge the "ruffians."

There was a two-horse stage line in operation in the early '60's, carrying the mail from Atchison to Louisville. At that time—years before the railroad was built up the Kaw valley—Louisville was one of the most prominent towns in Pottawatomie county, having, in the spring of 1859, been an important station on the route of the Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express. J. H. Thompson, a man well along in years, was the contractor for carrying the mail, and he was one of the jolliest and best-natured old men I ever knew. He was very popular, and every one liked him. Almost every man, woman and child on the route knew him, but they simply knew him as "Uncle Johnny" Thompson.

This mail line, as then operated, ran *via* Monrovia, Arrington, Holton, James Crossing and Vienna to its destination. Holton was really the only prominent place on the route between its initial and terminal points. Uncle Johnny's stage left Atchison every Saturday at eight A. M., and arrived from Louisville on Fridays at six P. M. Although the fare from Atchison to Louisville by the stage was eight dollars, really it proved to be not much of a bonanza for the proprietor. The building of the Atchison & Pike's Peak railroad to a point a few miles west of Atchison, in the later '60's, knocked out the stage line so many years operated by the genial Uncle Johnny.

The St. Joseph & Atchison railroad was finished to Winthrop (opposite Atchison) and opened for traffic about February 22, 1860. Richard B. Morris was passenger conductor on the first train. Shortly following the completion of the road from St. Joseph to Winthrop (East Atchison), a great celebration over the event was planned to take place in Atchison, and later the day was fixed for June 13, 1860. The noted event took place according to program, the occasion for celebrating being the completion of the road from St. Joseph to Atchison and the breaking of ground on the Atchison & Pike's Peak (Central Branch Union Pacific) and the Atchison & Fort Union (now the Santa Fé) roads. From the preparations that had for weeks been going on, it was evident some days before the time set that an immense crowd would be present at the celebration, and that they must in some manner be entertained by the citizens of Atchison.

Promptly following the hour of twelve, beginning on the morning of the 13th of June, 1860, the work of firing 100 guns at intervals began. Those tired and wanting rest did n't like the noise, but there was little sleep for any one during the firing, which was slowly kept up the balance of the night. The last gun belched forth as the king of day was making his appearance on the eastern horizon. The weather was lovely; not a cloud to be seen. A gentle breeze kept the atmosphere cool. During the day over 3000 flags of different sizes floated in the breeze from poles, housetops and windows throughout the city.

The special train bearing invited guests from the East came on the newly completed road from St. Joseph at half-past ten A. M., with flags flying and a brass band playing.

The passenger steamer *Black Hawk* about the same hour came up from Kansas City, loaded to the guards with representatives from that place; while leading citizens also came from Wyandotte, Leavenworth, Lawrence, Topeka, and other towns of less importance. Kansas City then did not have 10,000 population, and there was little more than half that number of people in Leavenworth. The latter place, then by far the largest and best town in Kansas, sent a brass band along, and choice music, at frequent intervals, was discoursed throughout the day by the various bands present.

The authorities had cleaned up the city, and everthing was in splendid holiday attire. There was a profuse display of bunting from nearly every business house on Commercial street, and that conspicuous thoroughfare never before presented such a gay and attractive appearance. Second street, which had already assumed a business aspect from Main to Commercial, was also gorgeously decorated, and had never before looked so inviting. The Massasoit House, then the leading hotel in the city, three stories high, was decked with several hundred flags, and, all together, perhaps no other Western town of its size and importance at that early day ever presented a grander or more imposing spectacle.

In the procession that formed along Second street on that special occasion, one of the unique and attractive features was a mammoth Government wagon trimmed with evergreens, and loaded with thirty-four girls dressed in white, representing every State in the Union and the Territory of Kansas. Besides, there were three other wagons filled with little girls, similarly dressed, representing all of the forty-one counties of Kansas in its last year of territorial existence.

One of the contractors for Government freighting had a huge prairie-schooner drawn by twenty-nine yoke of oxen, the head of each animal ornamented with a small flag, while he himself was mounted upon a mule. The contractor was quite an attraction, dressed in the peculiar Western prairie and plains frontier cowboy costume, with buckskin pants, red flannel shirt, boots nearly knee high, with revolver and bowie-knife buckled around his waist dangling by his sides. The procession in line marched west along Commercial street to near Tenth. It was a long one, and it was estimated that there were 7000 people in it, and at least 10,000 in the city witnessing the festivities.

The ceremony of breaking ground for these two roads took place about noon, but there was nothing particularly imposing about it. The most important part of the exercises was the turning over of a few spadefuls of earth by Col. Peter T. Abell, president of the road, and Capt. Eph. Butcher, a railroad contractor. The event was witnessed by fully 5000 people, after which the monster procession reformed, and, headed by a brass band with other bands at different places in the line, marched across White Clay creek to the grove in the southwest part of the city, where the oration—one of the best on railroads ever made in Atchison—was delivered by Gen. Benjamin F. Stringfellow. Following the oration several speeches were made by the most prominent of the invited guests; one of them by Col. C. K. Holliday, of Topeka, one of the founders of the great "Santa Fé" system, which many years ago became a road of national importance.

The barbecue—probably the first one ever gotten up in Kansas—was an important feature of the affair. Six beeves, twenty hogs and over fifty sheep, pigs and lambs were roasted. There were also prepared more than a hundred boiled hams, several thousand loaves of bread, cakes by the hundred, besides sundry other delicacies to tickle the palate and help make the occasion one long to be remembered by all present. The exercises were quite elaborate, and wound up with a ball in the evening, at A. S. Parker's hall, on the west side of Sixth street, between Commercial and Main, and a wine supper in Charley Holbert's building, on Second street, just north of the Massasoit House.

The festivities connected with the elaborate program made the celebration a complete success; quite a number of the visitors came from a long distance east, some as far as New England. Most of the Northern states were represented, and a few came from the "Sunny South." Free transportation was furnished the invited guests. Hundreds came by rail and steamboat, and many poured in from the surrounding country for miles, in wagons and on horseback, from eastern Kansas and western Missouri.

Such a celebration had never before (and it is known by the old-timers has never since) been witnessed in Atchison; in fact, never before had there been a similar event gotten up on Kansas soil. It was intended at the time of the celebration to begin work soon on the proposed and already chartered Atchison & Pike's Peak line west, but the "unpleasantness" which broke out between the North and South came early the following year, and, like most other important undertakings, the projected enterprise went through several years of a sort of Rip Van Winkle sleep.

Before railroads were in operation, there was shipped westward by ox and mule train from Atchison, in 1865, freight aggregating 21,541,830 pounds. For transporting this vast amount it required 4917 wagons, 6164 mules, 27,685 oxen, and 1256 men. A considerable part of the freight shipped was for Denver and the leading Colorado mining camps of that early date.*

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*The traffic across the plains from Atchison had grown to mammoth proportions as early as 1860. During the first nine months that year forty-one regular traders and freighters did business there. The trains outfitted were drawn by mules and cattle, and were composed of 1828 wagons, 1549 men, 401 mules, and 15,263 oxen. The so-called "Pike's Peak Gold Mines" had been discovered only two years and prospecting in that region was in its in-

The Salt Lake trade grew to be enormous in the '60's, and a great many ox trains loaded at Atchison and other points on the Missouri river for the "City of the Saints." It took money—and lots of it, too—to ship freight 1200 miles across the plains and Rockies during the civil war. An idea of the cost of transportation may be had when it is known that one mercantile house in the Mormon metropolis, in 1865, paid $150,000 for hauling, alone, that year's supplies.

Often loaded ox trains nearly a mile in length were seen on Commercial street, extending from along the levee way out to Harmony Garden, in the western suburbs. Some of the ponderous prairie-schooners would be loaded down with hardware or some other dead weight and drawn by six to eight yoke of cattle. The commerce of the plains by the great Platte route was immense, and a larger number of wagons loaded at and departed from Atchison than from any other point on the Missouri river.

In the early part of 1866, it was known by the business men of Atchison that that place would not much longer enjoy the benefits derived from being the starting-point of the overland stage line. Work was going rapidly forward on the main line of the Union Pacific from Omaha, and the track on the Kansas Pacific was also being rapidly extended westward up the Kaw valley towards the Rocky Mountains. Grading had for some time

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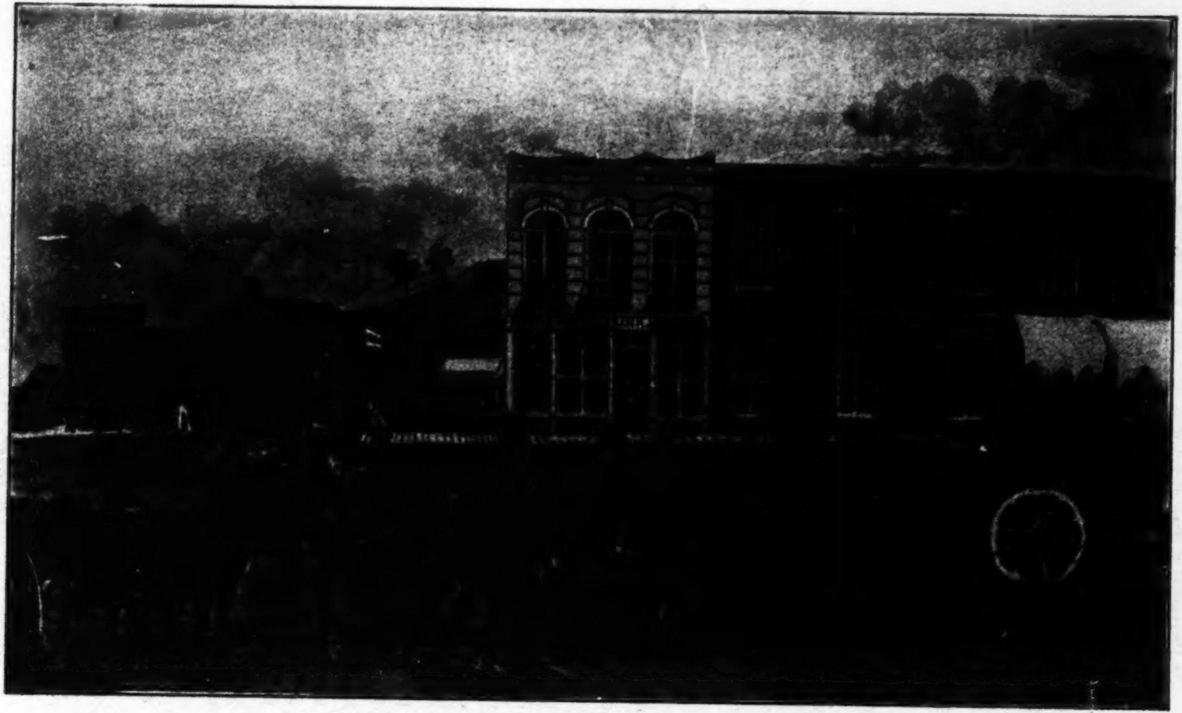
fancy. The population of Denver did not exceed 2200. The new mines, it may truthfully be said, were hardly opened, but some idea of the vast trade with the new diggings may be learned when it is known that thirty-three of the forty-one trains that left Atchison that season were destined for Denver. One of the trains was composed of 125 wagons and carried 750,000 pounds of merchandise. It was one of the longest trains ever sent out, extending from the levee way beyond the western outskirts of the city. The outfit was managed by fifty-two men, twenty-two mules, and 1542 oxen. Several of the trains for the Colorado metropolis had from twenty to fifty wagons. One sent out by Jones & Cartwright had fifty-eight wagons, and carried over 300,000 pounds of merchandise. Among the various trains sent out, one was for Santa Fe, one for Colorado City, two for Green river, and four for Salt Lake City. In the various regular trains that outfitted at and left Atchison that year, there was transported across the plains 6,590,875 pounds of merchandise. The biggest outfit was that of Irwin, Jackman & Co., Government freighters, who, during the season, sent out 520 wagons, 650 men, 75 mules, and 6240 oxen. This firm had a contract for supplying the military posts on the plains, including Forts Kearney, Laramie, Bridger, Douglas (overlooking Salt Lake City), and Camp Floyd, some distance southwest of the Mormon capital. Besides these trains, there was, in addition, a large amount of lesser outfits sent out by private parties in Atchison with one, two or three wagons each, but none of the latter are enumerated. The most of this freight was brought up the Missouri river by steamboat and unloaded along two or three blocks on the levee at Atchison. From the latter part of February, 1860, until the following fall, the Hannibal & St. Joseph Railroad Company delivered at Atchison 1900 tons of goods and merchandise, not including any of the home trade of the Atchison merchants nor the amount of goods shipped by the United States Government freighters.



A BULL TRAIN LEAVING ATCHISON FOR DENVER, IN EARLY '60's.

been going forward on the Atchison & Pike's Peak railroad, and quite a large force was employed completing the road-bed for track-laying westward.

In March a side-track on the east bank of the Missouri river at Winthrop (opposite Atchison) was laid to the water's edge. On Wednesday night, March 28, the first locomotive—a Rodgers—was brought across the Missouri on the steam ferry-boat *Ida* and put on the track of the Atchison & Pike's Peak road, the iron on which had already been spiked down for a distance of seven or eight miles west. At three P. M. the engine was steamed up, gave a toot, and ran out on the track a few squares to the western outskirts of the city, the tender being completely covered with boys, waving hats and handkerchiefs, shouting and yelling loud enough to drown the noise of the engine. Later the boys felt quite merry that they were among the number who had ridden on the first locomotive that was fired up on the Atchison & Pike's Peak (afterwards changed to the Central Branch Union Pacific, and now the important Atchison branch of the Missouri Pacific).

The first passenger-train to go out on this road left Atchison on the 9th of July, 1866, and ran fourteen miles, to Monrovia, then the end of track. Following is the first time-card issued:

ATCHISON & PIKE'S PEAK RAILROAD.

—o—

On and after Monday, July 9th, 1866, a Passenger Train will

LEAVE ATCHISON

For Monrovia and end of Track at . 7:30 a. m.

RETURNING.

Arrive in Atchison at . . . . 6:00 p. m.

Freight taken on reasonable terms.

WM. OSBORN, Contractor.

When the first forty miles of the road were finished, which took it to a point on the rolling prairie west of the Kickapoo Indian reservation, between Netawaka and Wetmore, at the "Y," an excursion train carrying a number of high officials from the East, representing the Government, went over the line. On the train were several officials of the road; also representatives of the press, and county and city officials of Atchison. The representatives of the Government were sent out to inspect the road-bed, previous to its acceptance and paying over the stipulated price,

$16,000 per mile. The line was pushed rapidly forward, and the last rail completing the road to the one-hundredth mile-post, on the Little Blue river—afterwards christened "Waterville—was spiked down on the 29th of December, 1867.

At the election of the first United States senators from Kansas, following the admission of the state into the Union, in January, 1861, Atchison had a prominent candidate in the person of Gen. Samuel C. Pomeroy. The first state legislature convened on March 26, and immediately the scheming began. The excitement at Topeka among the politicians was at its highest. At Atchison everything connected with the election was anxiously looked for.

The mail facilities between Atchison and the state capital in those early days were somewhat inferior. Topeka did not then enjoy the advantages of the telegraph. The swiftest mode of public conveyance between the two points was a two-horse hack, and it required about twelve hours to make the trip each way, three times a week.

This plan, although at the time the best existing between these two important towns, was deemed altogether too slow during the chosen day on that historic occasion. Atchison was practically unanimous for the election of her distinguished citizen. The anxiety to get the latest news in the shortest space of time was up to fever heat. It appeared at the time to be a critical period in her history. Some of the leading men more deeply interested in the result quietly organized a scheme of a pony express, and, with several relays at convenient distances, carried the highly important news of the first senatorial election from Topeka to Atchison in a little less than five hours, conveying the pleasing result, which was the selection of Generals Lane and Pomeroy.

On receipt of the news at Atchison there was great rejoicing by the citizens, irrespective of party. In a few days following there was a meeting, and the result was ratified by public speaking, the brass band discoursing enlivening music. The victory at the time was believed to be the most glorious achievement in the history of the city, and on that occasion free-state and pro-slavery men who had previously been fighting each other were now virtually united for the future prosperity of the believed-to-be "coming metropolis of Kansas."

Before the two chosen senators departed for Washington they were given a reception by the citizens of Atchison at the Massasoit House. A grand banquet followed, at which earnest and patriotic speeches were made, not only by the senators elect but also by a number of the guests.

In connection with the early history of Atchison, the Massasoit House was really the only first-class hotel in the city in the spring of 1859, although three other houses were in operation: the pioneer National, erected as early as 1855—a plain log structure, on the north side of Atchison street a few rods east of Second, and overlooking the Missouri river; the Tremont, a two-story frame, at the southeast corner of Second and Main; and the Planters, at the southwest corner of Commercial and Sixth, on the site of which now stands the palatial Exchange National Bank building, erected in the '80's, by the late Hon. Wm. Hetherington, who was first engaged in the dry-goods trade, and afterwards began banking in 1860. The Massasoit was a substantial and rather imposing frame building—the pride of the city, being the finest public house in Kansas outside of Leavenworth and Lawrence. It fronted east and south, stood three stories above the basement, and was elegantly furnished. It did a very large business in those early days, when the old town was headquarters for overland staging. All the other lines which ran in nearly every direction out of Atchison in the later '50's and early '60's departed from the Massasoit. The house was always a favorite place for political gatherings, from the balcony of which many speeches from able men of various political parties have been made. In early days one of its rooms was the hiding-place a day or two for two or three slaves, secreted there by their master. Wagon-trains, drawn by oxen and mules, frequently passed the house, destined for the plains and Rocky Mountain points. The first dinner eaten in Kansas by Horace Greeley was at the Massasoit, May 15, 1859. Abraham Lincoln was a guest there the day John Brown was executed. In its day few hotels in Kansas could boast of having entertained more public men.

The first macadamizing ordered done by the city was on Commercial street. The contractor was J. P. Brown, one of Atchison's pioneers, who has seen the city grow from a few houses in the '50's until it has become an important railroad center and one of the best milling and jobbing points in Kansas. By hard work, indomitable push and enterprise he has forged his way to the front, and years ago was quoted an Atchison millionaire.

In the later '50's I used to meet on the streets of Atchison, almost daily, a plainly dressed man, and soon learned that his name was R. H. Weightman, an ex-major in the United States Army. I recognized the name at once, for I had several times heard it associated with a frontier tragedy. Weightman was a fine-looking man, a modest gentleman of refinement, and had been raised in the sunny South. He was a man of intensely pro-slavery convictions and was untiring in his efforts to make Kansas a slave state.

The major had lived in New Mexico, and some years before was editor of a newspaper at the territorial capital of New Mexico bearing the name of the Santa Fé *Herald*. F. X. Aubrey, a Canadian Frenchman by birth, and a man of pluck and indomitable energy and perseverance, had made something of a reputation on a wager in 1852, riding a distance of 800 miles in ten days from Santa Fé to Independence, Mo. He won the wager, making the ride in a few hours over eight days. The next year (1853) he wagered $1000 that he could cover the same distance on horseback in eight days. His bet was accepted, for not one man in 100,000 had the physical endurance to perform the seemingly important task. He accordingly set out on the journey, and accomplished it in a little less than five days.

After these two rides Aubrey was for some time engaged in freighting on the plains and he and Major Weightman had become warm friends. He afterwards made a trip of adventure, taking to California a flock of sheep, and, contrary to all expectations, the result proved a great financial success. Later he returned to New Mexico. Not long after his return he met his friend Major Weightman, who was an admirer of his pluck and wild adventure and daring. As was then customary at such meetings, the drinks were called for. After the liquor was poured into the glasses and they were ready to swallow it, Aubrey asked his friend why he had printed a d—— lie about his trip to California. Instead of drinking, Weightman pitched the contents of his glass in Aubrey's face. Aubrey then started to draw his gun and shoot, when Weightman, aware of the danger, quickly drew his knife and pierced Aubrey's heart, from which blow he dropped to the floor and almost instantly expired. Only a few seconds elapsed until the entire affair, which ended in the terrible tragedy, was enacted from beginning to end.

During the great immigration to Kansas in the spring of 1857, when Jefferson City was the end of the Missouri Pacific railroad, a "lightning line" of river packets was put on the Missouri, closely connecting with fast trains from St. Louis, carrying passengers and the United States mail and express from the terminus of the only railroad west of the Missouri river and east of the Rockies. There were half a dozen elegant steamers composing this "lightning line." All of them were veritable floating palaces, and ran west to Kansas City, Leavenworth, and Weston. One of them was named for Aubrey, the fearless rider who had twice broken all records on horseback riding across the plains.

FIRST TELEGRAPH TO KANSAS AND NEBRASKA. The construction of the Missouri & Western telegraph line was begun at Syracuse, Mo., in 1859, that town then being the terminus of the Missouri Pacific railroad. Charles M. Stebbins built the line, which extended in a southwesterly course, *via* Fayetteville and Van Buren, to Fort Smith, Ark., which at that early day was quite an important town on the route of the southern or Butterfield Overland Mail Company.

A branch of this line—the first constructed up the Missouri valley—was extended westward to Kansas City, and the wire reached Leavenworth early in the spring of 1859. Sufficient inducements were held out by leading citizens and business men, and in a few months the line was finished to Atchison. The new enterprise was known as the Stebbins line.

The early days of Kansas were noted as somewhat eventful ones for the city of Atchison. The place was classed both as a pro-slavery and an abolition town some time before the territory was admitted into the Union. For the first time since the founding of the place, in 1854, the afternoon of the 15th of August, 1859, will be remembered by many of the old-timers as a proud day in the history of the old town so pleasantly located among the hills at the great western bend of the Missouri river. On that afternoon, more than forty-two years ago, communication with the outside world was first had by telegraph. The event made it an occasion that will not soon be forgotten by the few hundreds of people then residing there.

The pioneer telegraph line was a great enterprise in its day. The office was in the first brick building on the south side of

A RANCHMAN AND HIS BUFFALO TEAM, SEEN IN ATCHISON IN THE EARLY '60's. *Page 27.*

Commercial street, between the levee and Second, up-stairs, adjoining the *Freedom's Champion* office. The building was one of the oldest in Atchison, and a portion of the dilapidated walls of it, until a few years since, were left standing.

John T. Tracy, a young man and a strong pro-slavery sympathizer, whose home was in southwest Missouri, was the first operator. I was then employed as foreman on the *Champion*, and was in the telegraph office when the line was finished and the circuit made, and was much interested in seeing how the first news was sent and received by wire.

Gen. Samuel C. Pomeroy, afterwards United States senator, was mayor in 1859, and courtesy naturally gave him the honor of sending the first messages. The telegrams sent and received were as follows:

"ATCHISON, August 15, 1859.

"*His Honor H. B. Denman, Mayor of Leavenworth:* Our medium of communication is perfected. May our fraternal relations continue—our prosperity and success equal our highest efforts.

S. C. POMEROY, *Mayor of Atchison*."

Mayor Denman replied as follows:

"*Hon. S. C. Pomeroy, Mayor of Atchison:* May each push forward its works of enterprise, and the efforts of each be crowned with success.

H. B. DENMAN, *Mayor of Leavenworth*."

Congratulations were then exchanged between Atchison and St. Louis, as follows:

"ATCHISON, August 15, 1859.

"*His Honor O. D. Filley, Mayor of St. Louis:* For the first time since the world began, a telegraph message is sent to St. Louis from this place, the farthest telegraph station in the West. Accept our congratulations, and aid us in our progress westward.

S. C. POMEROY, *Mayor of Atchison*."

John A. Martin, editor of *Freedom's Champion*, and Gideon O. Chase, editor of the Atchison *Union*, were both present. Martin wrote out a dispatch for the Leavenworth *Times*, the only daily newspaper then published in Kansas, and each wrote a dispatch to the *Democrat* and *Republican*, respectively, the only great dailies then published in St. Louis. The several telegrams sent and received were as follows:

"ATCHISON, August 15, 1859.

"*C. Vaughan:* Another link in the girdle which Puck was to put 'around the earth in forty minutes' is completed. Its first message, in

October and November, will bring to you the news of the success of the Wyandotte constitution and the majority old Atchison intends to give Parrott. JOHN A. MARTIN."

"LEAVENWORTH, August 15, 1859.

"*To John A. Martin:* Your greeting was welcome. Accept my warmest congratulations. The Leavenworth republicans are harnessed for the liberty fight. Success to your city, your journal, and our common cause.

CHAMPION VAUGHAN."

"ATCHISON, August 15, 1859.

"*Editors St. Louis Democrat:* Puck's 'girdle around the earth' will soon be realized. To-day the Stebbins telegraph line was completed and the office opened at this city, fourteen miles further west than any telegraph station east of the Rocky Mountains. We send you greeting. The Salt Lake mail leaves here to-morrow.

JOHN A. MARTIN, *Editor Champion.*"

"*Editors Missouri Republican:* We congratulate you on the completion of the Atchison and St. Louis telegraph to this city. We are indebted to the triple alliance of labor, capital and science for the final success of this great enterprise. We will now hand to you important news from Salt Lake one day earlier than heretofore *via* Leavenworth. This is the point where the Salt Lake mail first touches the Missouri.

Respectfully yours, G. O. CHASE, *Editor Union.*"

Atchison, which as early as 1859 had become an important freighting point, was also the farthest western town on the continent, east of the Rocky Mountains, having railway and telegraph advantages. The terminus of the Stebbins line, however, did not long remain at Atchison. The wire was soon stretched along the west bank of the Missouri to Brownsville and Omaha, Neb.

It was here, in the later '50's, coming in from off the plains by stage and ox and mule train, that the telegraph first sent off on its "lightning wings" the news from California, Salt Lake, and the newly discovered Pike's Peak gold region. The glad tidings were sent to anxious relatives and friends scattered far and wide over the country: from the "Big Muddy" to the Atlantic seaboard; from the Great Lakes in the north to the Crescent City, near the "Father of Waters."

While sitting in the Atchison telegraph office a few weeks later, after working hours (October 16, 1859), spending the evening with the operator, the first news was flashed over the wire telling of the capture of Harper's Ferry by old John Brown. The exciting event greatly startled the operator, John T. Tracy, who was a

Southern man, and naturally sympathized with the land of his birth and its "peculiar institution." We were chums, and spent the most of our leisure hours together, and had become warm friends. As I sat by his side he listened attentively to the click of the telegraph instrument, and repeated to me every word of the report that was then going over the wire for the daily press at St. Joseph; and his comments thereon were not in sympathy with "Old John Brown," whose soul has since been "marching on."

The result of the discovery of gold in what was known as the "Pike's Peak District," in 1858 and 1859, was the building up of an immense business in freighting across the plains. This was necessary to supply the rush of miners and prospectors who had fitted out and gone to the new mines of western Kansas. There was no Colorado at that time. The western boundary of Kansas was on the summit of the Rocky Mountains.

In the fall of 1859, Thomas L. Fortune, a citizen of Mount Pleasant, Atchison county, Kansas, conceived a scheme that he verily believed in a short time would make him a handsome "fortune" in fact. He planned a steam wagon, with which he expected to haul a loaded train of freight wagons from the Missouri river across the country to the new El Dorado in western Kansas. He built at St. Louis, in the spring of 1860, a monster vehicle, twenty feet long by eight feet wide. The wheels were twelve inches wide and eight feet in diameter. A large cask contained the water to feed the boiler. The "overland wagon" was transported up the Missouri river on the steamer *Meteor*. It was landed from the steamer in front of the White Mice saloon (a noted drinking resort on the Atchison levee in the early days) one night during the latter part of June, 1860.

In a day or two after its arrival it was arranged that the steam wagon should make a trial trip on the 4th of July. The monster was accordingly fired up on the eighty-fourth national anniversary, and started by an engineer named Callahan, a native of the "Green Isle." The wagon was ornamented with a number of flags, and it was also loaded with a crowd of anxious men and boys, numbering a score or more. Everything in readiness, the valve was opened by the man at the throttle, and the wagon moved off in a southerly direction from near Woolfolk's warehouse, on the levee. It went all right until the foot of Commercial street was reached, about a square away. The pilot, failing to turn the machine, it kept on straight up to the sidewalk, and ran into A. S. Parker's mammoth outfitting house, which stood so long by the old historic cottonwood tree at the southeast corner of Commercial street and the levee. The result of this awkward blunder was an accident, by which a son of the owner of the wagon had an arm broken, as the machine crashed into the side of the building, which was a long, one-story frame cottonwood structure that for a number of years was a noted landmark in Atchison's early history.

The excited engineer was at once let out, and Lewis Higby, another engineer and a natural genius, was sent for. Higby mounted the wagon and took his place at the engine, backed the machine out into the middle of the road, and in a few minutes went sailing gracefully along west on Commercial street at a six-mile-gait. When in front of Jesse Crall's California stable, at the corner of Sixth street, before that part of Commercial street had been graded, it went down a little hill at a lively speed, but Higby kept it a going, and did not stop until it reached L. C. Challiss's addition, just south and west from Commercial and Eighth streets, near Morgan Willard's old foundry, built in 1859, away from the business and residence portion of the city.

After the wagon crossed Eighth street, and was beyond the business houses, Higby turned on more steam, and the monster vehicle made about eight miles an hour, cavorting around on the bottom, there being only a few scattering buildings then west of Eighth. To test the practicability of the machine, it was run into hollows and gullies and, where the ground was soft, it was found that the ponderous wheels would sink into the mud when standing still in soft ground. The result of the trial, witnessed by hundreds, was disappointment to most of those present.

The inventor, who had spent a large amount of money and much time in trying to perfect his new steam wagon and solve the overland transportation problem, was the worst disappointed. He was thoroughly disgusted. He was mad. He saw at once that the use of the vehicle was impracticable, and that it would never answer the purpose. That trial trip was the first and only one the "overland steam wagon" ever made. It was accordingly abandoned on the bottom, near where the tracks of the Central Branch and Santa Fé roads are now laid, and was never afterward fired up. Those who had crossed the plains with mules and oxen

TRIAL TRIP OF THE OVERLAND STEAM WAGON, AT ATCHISON. *Page 431.*

knew it could never be utilized in overland freighting. There was no use for any such vehicle, and the anticipated reduction in prices of ox and mule teams did not take place. The timbers used in the framework of the machine that were not stolen finally went to decay, and the machinery was afterwards taken out and disposed of for other purposes. But Mr. Fortune was not the first inventor whose original scheme to amass a fortune failed.

The fall of 1863 found me employed as express messenger between Atchison and Denver on Ben. Holladay's overland stage line. While stopping a week in Atchison on one of my return trips from the west, Paul Coburn, the stage company's agent at Atchison, invited a half-dozen of his friends—among the number myself—to partake of a fried quail and prairie-chicken supper. The place was the "tony" restaurant kept by Wm. Yates, the experienced and popular colored caterer, in a small stone building on the southwest corner of Commercial and Second streets, the ground now occupied by the Byram hotel, little more than half a square from the "Overland" headquarters.

Even as early as 1863, the little stone building had long been known as an old, historic landmark. It was put up by a border ruffian from Weston, Mo., in 1854, being one of the first buildings erected in Atchison. It was first used as a store by a Mr. Blassingame, from South Carolina. Subsequently it was occupied as a grocery, then a meeting-house, afterward as a law office, real-estate office, banking-house, editorial sanctum, office for the city marshal, jail, calaboose, cigar store, whisky shop, dentist's office, and for other purposes. Doctor Cochran, father of Congressman Cochran, of St. Joseph, Mo., for a time had his office there in the '60's. It was in this building that the first religious services ever held by a free-state clergyman in Atchison were conducted, and during the exercises a game of "chuck-a-luck" was being played on a stump outside, not a rod away.

In the early days this old building was the headquarters for a company of border ruffians from South Carolina, numbering something over 100, who rallied there in 1855 to wipe out the abolitionists, as every free-state man was then termed. When unoccupied, the building was used by the "ruffians" for a target, and was all the time during their sojourn in Atchison the chief office of the "border-ruffian pro-slavery grape-vine telegraph." It was in this same building that the scheme was concocted of "tar-

and-feathering" and setting adrift in the Missouri river, on a raft Rev. Pardee Butler, a free-state clergyman, for publicly expressing his sentiments for freedom. It was a favorite rendezvous in border-ruffian times, and, when in town, pro-slavery sympathizers frequently rallied there from all directions.

The old building had been used in pioneer days for a great variety of purposes. Hon. Franklin G. Adams, so long the veteran secretary of the Kansas State Historical Society, when probate judge of Atchison county, in the later '50's, wrote editorials in it, when he was one of the editors of the *Squatter Sovereign*, after that early paper was purchased from its original founders and changed from a fiery pro-slavery to a radical free-state journal. Political meetings were often held there by both parties, and one of the first sermons ever delivered in Atchison was preached by Father James Shaw, the pioneer Kansas Methodist, in the historic building. This noted old structure was only one square north of the Massasoit House.

Referring again to the banquet, Coburn and his guests assembled at Yates's about half-past nine o'clock, and in a few minutes all sat down to one of the most elegant suppers of the kind ever gotten up in Atchison. It was prepared in Yates's best style, and no person in the West knew better than he how to get things up in the most palatable shape. After eating for an hour or so and finishing the solids, the fluids were ordered. Of the promiscuous drinking that was indulged in, the wholesale part of it was done by Coburn, who at the time seemed to be a sort of walking still-house. He imbibed freely of several kinds of wine, then he drank whisky, then brandy, and nearly everything else usually partaken of, especially if it even smelled of anything like an "antidote for snake-bite." Like himself, Coburn wanted—even insisted—that his guests should sample everything in the liquor line about the house. It was not long until he, vulgarly speaking, was most gloriously drunk. A mere glance at his countenance showed that he was dangerous. He had a small arsenal about his person in the shape of a pair of six-shooters, and he looked as if he intended to use them.

Having finished eating and drinking, Coburn soon arose from the table, went into the adjoining barroom, and began to "paint the place red"—firing several times in quick succession at the well-filled decanters standing on the shelves behind the bar.

After he had broken a number of them, and the liquor was running streams in every direction on the floor, for some additional amusement he then turned his attention to shooting at the chandelier which hung from the ceiling in the center of the room. He flourished over his head in his peculiar manner one of his revolvers, and offered to bet his pile that he could "snuff out all the lights in the room." Raising his gun and taking deliberate aim, one after another he soon broke every lamp that hung in the chandelier. Then we were all suddenly left in darkness.

Thinking some of us might accidentally get "snuffed out" too by his promiscuous shooting, and none of us caring to risk ourselves as targets on such an occasion, the most of the guests hastily but quietly withdrew from the premises and, thinking our beds the safest place for us, hurried home and at once retired for the night. Coburn was left with the proprietor in undisputed possession of the place, but he did not long remain, for he had shot away all his ammunition and there was nothing left to amuse himself with; so he soon retired. The next morning he had pretty much sobered up, and called on the colored restaurateur for his bill. His account had been made out, and he paid it without a word of complaint or explanation, and went to his office apparently oblivious of his worse than beastly debauch of the night previous.

But this little episode, I soon afterward learned, was nothing new in Atchison. Yates told me such sprees were periodical with Coburn, and that he himself had witnessed at least half a dozen of a similar nature in the various restaurants he had kept there. In fact, they had become to be sort of monotonous, and many guests wondered, when quietly eating there, if Coburn would not suddenly appear on the premises, and, without warning, clean out the entire place.

Notwithstanding his somewhat strange and peculiar ways, Coburn really was not the desperately bad fellow that many believed him to be. He was a genial-hearted young man, possessed of a good education, and was spoken of as a splendid business man. In stature he was small, but he had a big, warm heart. One of his legs was "a little longer than it really" should have been, and he always used a cane.

Singular as it may seem, however, Coburn appeared to take delight in having an occasional spree, but he was careful never to go on a "toot" during business hours. He was always to be found at his desk in the office. There was no disputing, however, that he could "make Rome howl" when on one of his regular, old-fashioned "jamborees." A great many sympathized with him because he was a cripple and an orphan. He formerly lived in western Missouri and was raised by Gen. Bela M. Hughes, with whom, in his boyhood days, he was a great favorite. At Atchison he had hosts of warm friends, and he likewise had some bitter enemies. Being a cripple many times saved him from getting soundly thrashed. No one cared to get his ill will if it could be avoided. At times he would be arbitrary and obstinate, and, when "out of sorts," he would be cross and irritable, and frequently the most trifling thing would annoy and provoke him.

On an occasion some time previous to this, I remember that the late Bishop E. S. Janes, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, was one of the west-bound passengers across the plains by the overland stage. The bishop had taken a seat inside the coach, and he and Coburn had, for some minutes before the stage departed, become engaged in a rather spirited controversy concerning certain rights and privileges of passengers overland. The longer the controversy continued, the more it appeared evident to all of the anxious listeners that the bishop, who was very cool and careful in his remarks, was getting the better of the agent in the argument. Coburn finally got desperately mad at the bishop, and, with his face as red as a beet, said to him:

"Well, I would n't make a d—— ass of myself."

"What makes you?" instantly retorted the bishop.

This unlooked for but somewhat cutting reply, as unexpected as it was caustic and unanswerable, was the termination of the argument. It proved a sort of boomerang. Coburn stood motionless and said nothing. There was really nothing that could be said after the bishop had so plainly spoken. The controversy suddenly closed. In a moment the coach started off up Commercial street on its journey toward the setting sun, while the passengers inside broke into a hearty laugh and congratulated the bishop on his quick repartee.

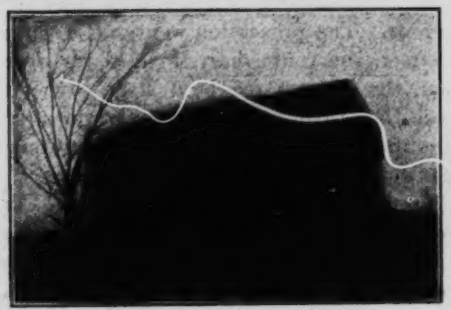
This little episode soon spread the entire length of the overland line, and Coburn for a time was greatly bored, and it was a long while before he heard the last of it. After the completion of the railroad across the plains and the overland stage had abandoned the place, Coburn left Atchison and went to Denver, where he was drawn into an encounter and killed a man named Hammond in a saloon with a billiard cue, in the early part of 1867. He had a trial and was acquitted. Subsequently he married, settled down on a Colorado ranch near Denver, and, in a few years afterward, died.

Many people of Atchison, before railroads were built west of the Missouri, were slow to realize the advantages of being the starting-point for the California mail. It was a dark day for the old town, however, when the "Overland" pulled out of the place for good, after having been running its stages out of the city almost daily since the summer of 1861, or for a period of little more than five years. The advance of the Union Pacific railroad from Omaha west along the Platte to Fort Kearney and the completion of the Kansas Pacific railway up the Kaw valley to near Manhattan was the cause of the move and the abandoning of Atchison, so long the point of departure in the '60's for the great overland mail.

The company had for some weeks been pulling the stock and coaches off of the eastern division, from the Missouri river to Rock creek and "bunching" them at Atchison. Several days' preparation had been gone through with, and, a little after eleven o'clock in the day (December 19, 1866) the long train or procession of Concord stages, hacks and express coaches started from their stables and yard on Second street, some drawn by six horses and some by four. The procession went out of town west along Commercial street, the route daily traveled for over five years. Alex. Benham, the veteran overland stage division agent and plainsman, and David Street, so long the paymaster and general manager of the line, headed the procession, in a Concord division buggy. Other employees in buggies followed; then came something like a dozen big Concord coaches; then the Concord hacks or canvas-covered stages; then the long express coaches, etc. There must have been forty or more teams in the procession or train, besides the loose horses led.

As the long line of vehicles moved out of Atchison, it seemed like a grand parade of a big show—all headed for their new destination, Fort Riley and Junction City. It was a magnificent sight to look upon, and yet there appeared to be something solemn or sad about it, when it was remembered that a similar scene would never be witnessed again in the old town. There were the familiar stages and express coaches and teams that had so often rolled down the busy streets of Atchison loaded with human freight, carrying hundreds of thousands of treasure, vast numbers of express packages, the well-known drivers, and, last but not least, the great overland letter mails between the Atlantic and Pacific. The stage line had had its day. The company was bidding a final adieu to the city and section of country its vast enterprise had so many years been such an important factor in helping to build up.

The old stages, so tastefully constructed and so useful and important in their day, were becoming too slow for the steady advance of civilization. The iron sinews of commerce that were rapidly stretching out over the rolling prairies from the great western bend of the Missouri were forcing the Concords to the rear. It was "the first low wash of waves"; the vast "human sea" soon to follow was rolling in behind them. The sight in some respects was a melancholy one. Many of the pioneers and old-time citizens of Atchison, who had for so many years watched the daily departure and arrival of the stages, heaved a sigh as the long familiar sight of the overland mail, passenger and express vehicles passed out from their gaze forever.



Calhoun county (Kan.) court-house, where Judge Lecompte held court in 1855. Now Jackson county.

CHAPTER XIX.

SKETCH OF THE OVERLAND STAGE PROPRIETOR.

BEN. Holladay, the great overland stage man, had some experience himself as a driver during his younger days, when, in the later '30's and the '40's, he resided in western Missouri—a considerable time at Weston, in Platte county. He was early known as "one of the boys," and the "Overland" drivers nearly all had a warm, even a friendly, feeling for him. Some of them fairly worshiped him. Besides being a genial fellow among the drivers and agents, all of the stage men recognized that he was at the head of the stage line and that they were his employees.

He was a genuine Westerner, having kept a dram-shop and tavern in Weston as early as 1838–'39. It is said his first achievement in Weston was "the capture of his wife and the pacification of the old man." In 1840 he was one of Weston's prominent business men. Later he was one of four men to buy the Union Mills at Weston and a large body of land. He went overland to California in 1849, and the same year, in company with his partner (Warner), took a train to Salt Lake City with $70,000 worth of goods. He spent some time on the frontier beyond the Rockies, in Utah, with headquarters at Salt Lake, where he had made considerable money long before his stage line was dreamed of. Besides operating the overland line for a little over five years, Holladay had other important interests in the great West. Among his enterprises was a fleet of first-class passenger steamers plying the Pacific between San Francisco and Portland, Ore.

It was Holladay's custom, once or twice a year, to make a trip in his special coach over the stage line, to look after his interests at the Golden Gate. During his trips overland he would be accompanied by his general superintendent, Mr. Geo. K. Otis, of New York, and never without his favorite colored man, who went along in the capacity of porter.

In the palmy days of overland staging, Holladay was quoted as a New York millionaire; but the Indian troubles which subsequently followed severely crippled him financially. The stage line was virtually abandoned for more than a month at one time when it otherwise would have been paying the best. Most of the army of employees, during the troubles, were doing little except drawing their pay. But it was monotonous to them; much more difficult to lie idle under the terrible suspense than it was to keep steadily at work. Most of them were anxious to be kept busily employed, and few dreamed that the embargo placed on the line by the savages would last more than a few days, or at farthest only a week or two. The long delay in the opening of the route in the summer and fall of 1864 was a severe blow to overland commerce and surprised every one. For a short time it became necessary, during this abandonment of stage traffic, to send the overland letter mail by ocean steamer and the Isthmus from New York. This Indian trouble was therefore extremely disastrous to the noted stage man. Property amounting to several hundred thousand dollars was destroyed, while the passenger business for six weeks at one time was completely paralyzed on the entire line, as was also the mail service. For three or four weeks at another time—only a few months afterward—the Indians destroyed a vast amount of stage property in another of their disastrous raids.

Ben. Holladay had a somewhat remarkable career. Few men in the country, at the time, accumulated wealth more rapidly; but he spent his money freely and was quite lavish with it, squandering vast sums when he was making it so easily. After he had accumulated a snug fortune he went to New York to live. He built one of the most magnificent residences a few miles out, on the Hudson, and called his place "Ophir Farm." Subsequently, after he was awarded several fat mail contracts,* he built an elegant mansion in Washington, opposite Franklin Square, on K street, near the residence of Hon. John Sherman. His house contained superb furniture and fittings; a large classical library of handsomely bound volumes, with fine oil paintings by celebrated masters in Europe and America; also a number of elegant bronzes and marble statuary. Among the figures of bronze were two lions which cost $6000 each. He had also many other mag-

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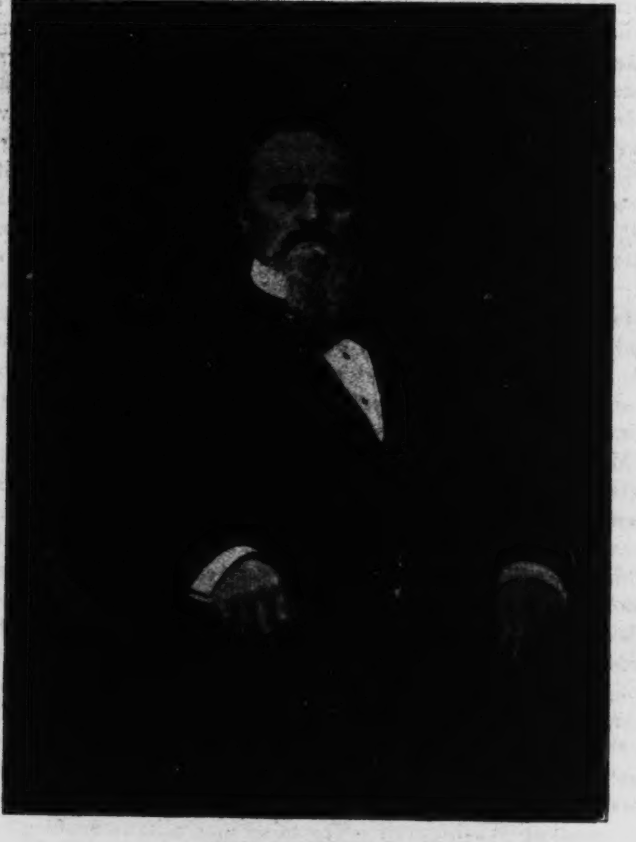
*Holladay was the sole contractor for carrying the mail on seven routes representing the "Overland" in Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Nevada, and Oregon, for which he received from the Government, between July 1, 1862, and June 30, 1866, the sum of $1,896,022. He was also interested—but his name did not appear—in the mail contract from Salt Lake to Placerville, constituting a part of the main line. It cost the Government $1,000,000 annually, for several years, to convey the mail on this line between the Missouri river and the California terminus.



BEN. HOLLADAY,

Proprietor of the Overland Stage Line
and the Holladay Overland Mail and Express Company.

Born in Kentucky, in 1824.
Died in Portland, Ore., in 1877.

nificent and costly works of art. While holding so many important Government contracts, Mr. Holladay resided, during the sessions of Congress, in Washington, for he had vast interests at stake in the great West and he often needed important congressional legislation.

In the early '60's he came into possession of the central overland California mail line, and subsequently, while operating it, serious trouble arose with the Indians along the Platte and Little Blue rivers. During 1864–'66 he was damaged to the extent of half a million dollars. Nearly all the stage stations for at least 400 miles were burned; a considerable amount of stock was run off; a number of stage-coaches, a vast amount of hay, corn, oats and much other valuable property belonging to him were destroyed. While at one time rolling in wealth—being worth millions—the tide suddenly changed, and nearly everything of the immense estate finally went. Lastly, in the spring of 1888, the Washington home, with its contents, was sold under the hammer.

Mr. Holladay died at Portland, Ore., in August, 1877. While he left a large amount of property, it seems the most of it was so encumbered that his widow and children realized little from it. Some years before his death he married a Miss Campbell, of Portland, who, with two young children, survived him. His first wife was born in Kentucky, but came with her parents to Platte county, Missouri, when a child. A singular fatality followed the four children of the first marriage. The two daughters married noblemen, and both met with distressing deaths, after sad experiences. One died in a Pullman car, while on her way from Omaha to the Pacific coast; and the other was taken ill on an ocean steamer while *en route* to New York, and died at a hotel soon after reaching that city. He had two sons, one of whom died at a hospital in Washington. The other met with an accident and lost his life in China from the effects of dissipation.

For a number of years before his death there was a bill pending in Congress for the reimbursement of Mr. Holladay to the amount of several hundred thousand dollars. This vast sum was for the losses he sustained by Indian raids on the plains while carrying the California overland mail; but after his death there was no one to look after the measure, and thus it ended.

A number of stories have been told since his death about Ben. Holladay having made some extraordinarily fast journeys across the country by his overland stage line as early as 1857. The most of these stories, however, were all the work of imagination. The fact is that no such trips were made by him in the '50's, for he did not get possession of the great stage line until December, 1861.

At a later period, however, it is told that Holladay was making an effort to get an increase in the subsidy for carrying the letter mail overland to California. The schedule time from Atchison to Salt Lake was eleven days, while it took six more to get to the California terminus, at Placerville. In order to convince the post-office department that the schedule could be considerably reduced in case he was better paid, the noted stage man, while at Salt Lake, sent the division agent from there East, and it was planned to make the highest speed possible in one of his Concord stage-coaches—a trip that would astonish the authorities at Washington as well as his friends all over the country.

Everything having been arranged, the millionaire stage proprietor left Salt Lake in his special coach, and was carried on extra-fast time over the Wasatch range and the Rockies, across the plains and over the rolling prairies, to Atchison, a distance of 1200 miles, in eight days and six hours. This was an unprecedented feat in overland staging, and astonished every one in Atchison when the vehicle rolled in. Such time had never before been excelled except by the pony express. The result—something without a parallel in staging—was telegraphed over the country, and naturally it made quite a sensation, especially among the post-office officials in Washington, and there was a speedy passage of the stage-man's bill, which for some time had been pending before Congress.

Ben. Holladay was in many respects quite a remarkable man. He was born in 1824, in Kentucky, near the old Blue Lick battlefield. He was a son of William Holladay, and his brothers were Jesse, David, Joseph, James H. and Andrew S. Holladay. The most of his early life was spent in western Missouri and on the plains. When a boy of seventeen he was Colonel Doniphan's courier in the far West. At the age of twenty-eight, with a train of fifty wagons loaded with merchandise, he entered Salt Lake valley, met Brigham Young, was indorsed by the Mormon prophet as being worthy of the confidence of the faithful, and this one act brought him first-class buyers for his goods. When his thirty-eighth milestone was reached he was at the head of the greatest stage line in the world. At the age of forty-five he was sole owner of sixteen Pacific Ocean steamers, carrying trade and passengers to Oregon, Panama, Japan, and China.

The rapid construction of the Pacific railroad kept shortening his stage line. New short routes were from time to time being opened, from several points along the railroad to a number of rich mining camps that were being developed in the great Northwest, and these he stocked with his surplus animals and coaches, and did an immense business.

The Union Pacific kept rapidly pushing its road westward across the Rockies, where it was to form a junction with the Central Pacific. The Central Pacific was rapidly building eastward in the later '60's, and Holladay was becoming financially embarrassed, largely in consequence of the frequent depredations committed by Indians on the Platte and Little Blue rivers. Property belonging to him aggregating hundreds of thousands of dollars was destroyed, and he thus became badly crippled. Wells, Fargo & Co., whose business throughout the mining camps in the West had then become immense and was rapidly growing, had for some time been making an effort to get possession of Holladay's great stage line. With Holladay, it seemed that now was the opportunity of his life. Under the circumstances, his only alternative was to sell, and thus the overland stage line, with its numerous feeders, passed into the hands of Wells, Fargo & Co., who later obtained control of and for many years subsequently operated nearly all the stage and express lines between the Missouri river and the Pacific ocean.*

In the St. Joseph *Argus*, July 8, 1893, there is an article by Hon. John Doniphan that contains much about Mr. Holladay, and which we reproduce here, with his permission:

"People of the present day who are hauled along from New York to San Francisco at the rate of thirty and forty miles an hour in five or six days have but little conception of the then gigantic enterprise known as the overland stage. When the Government let the first contract to transfer the mails from Independence to Salt Lake, in 1850, to Samuel Woodson, of Independence, the country from the western boundary of Missouri to Utah was a wilderness, more than a thousand miles in length, and occupied by herds of buffalo and roving bands of savages. Thousands of gold seekers had passed over it in the spring of 1849, and that year left only a trail of bleached bones of men and animals. A regiment of soldiers had been sent from Fort Leavenworth in May, 1849, to build stockade forts, at Kearney,[*] on the Platte, near the present site of Kearney, Neb.; one at Laramie, on the North Platte, forty miles north of the city of Laramie, in Wyoming; one at Fort Hall, a Hudson Bay trading point in Idaho; and one on the Columbia river, in Oregon. These were from 300 to 1000 miles apart, and afforded but little protection outside of the parade-grounds of the posts, as they were only garrisoned each by one or two companies of soldiers and liable at any time to be besieged by the hostile Indians. It required nerve to invest capital in such an enterprise, and although assurances were made that the United States would make good all losses to the contractors, these promises were poorly kept, as claims for such losses are still pending, and are likely to prove as long-lived as the Florida war claims or the French spoliations that came to us from last century. One of these is the claim of the heirs of the celebrated Ben. Holladay, who put in a claim for a half million of dollars, suffered by his stage line in 1864 and 1865, by the burning of stations, grain, loss of stock and interruption of travel by the Indian wars of those years.

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*Holladay got possession of the stage line at a price much less than the real value and original cost of the property. He afterwards spent a good deal of money for extra stock and coaches, shortening many of the drives, putting in a number of new stations, and employing a good deal of extra help. He was constantly making needed improvements on the line until he sold out to Wells, Fargo & Co., in the latter part of November, 1866. For his interest, which covered the animals, rolling-stock, stations, etc., on the main line and its branches, he received a million and a half in cash, in addition to upwards of a quarter of a million in paid-up stock of the express company. Besides this, Wells, Fargo & Co. paid him over half a million dollars in cash for the hay, grain, provisions, etc., on hand at the various stations when the transfer was made.

"Judge Samuel H. Woodson filled his contract, from July 1, 1850, to July 1, 1854, once a month, at $19,500 per year. It was then taken by W. M. F. McGraw, of Maryland, from July 1, 1854, to July 1, 1858, at $13,500 per year for a monthly service for carrying the mail. The profit was expected to grow out of passengers, at $180 to Salt Lake and $300 to California. But McGraw found it a losing business and failed in 1856. The line was then let for the residue of the contract to a Mormon firm, Kimball & Co., who ran it until the Mormon war of 1857, when the Government rescinded the contract and Col. A. S. Johnston, who afterward became commander-in-chief of the Confederate army, and was killed at Shiloh, was sent to Utah, and wintered in 1857–'58 at Fort Bridger. Up to this time the coaches were drawn by mule teams, and there were but three stations for changes of teams, the first being at Fort Kearney, 300 miles out from Independence; the second at Fort Laramie, on the North Platte, about 400 miles west of

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[*] Since the first part of this book went to press, Maj. Gen. Francis V. Greene has published a magazine article entitled "The United States Army," (Scribner. October, 1901,) in which he throws some light on the movements of Government troops between the Missouri river and California, in 1846. According to General Greene, Col. Stephen Watts Kearney commanded one of the three grand divisions of the army in its advance on Mexico, in 1846. He says: "Kearney with eight companies of the First Dragoons and 1000 volunteers from Missouri marched about 2500 miles from Fort Leavenworth across the plains, through the ranges of New Mexico and over the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific coast, arriving at San Diego, Cal., in less than six months." In his article General Greene quotes liberally from war department records, and uniformly spells Colonel Kearney's name Kearney. In this connection, read page 235, *et seq.*, this volume.

Kearney; and the third at Fort Bridger, about 500 miles west of Laramie, and then to Salt Lake. This coach line was *via* the South Pass, the route taken by the first gold seekers, in 1849 and 1850.

"The next contract let was after the 'Utah expedition' reached Salt Lake valley, to John M. Hockaday, of Missouri, for a weekly mail, at $190,000 per annum. In 1859 John M. Hockaday sold this contract, with the entire outfit, to Russell, Majors & Waddell, who were all Missourians. They formed the C. O. C. & P. P. Express, and extended the line of travel by coaches to California. This company was the Central Overland Califfornia and Pike's Peak Express Company, and was run by Russell, Majors & Waddell until April, 1861, when Gen. Bela M. Hughes, of St. Joseph, was elected president and assumed the sole management of it. Russell, Majors & Waddell had transferred the starting-points to Leavenworth and Atchison soon after the Hannibal railroad was completed, and from that time St. Joseph was the great shipping point from which the wagon-trains were started with supplies for the line. Trains of thirty wagons were used to haul provisions, forage and necessaries for each division of the line, as it took an immense amount of these to feed the vast army of employees and many hundred head of stock, with blacksmiths, harness-makers, carpenters, and wagon-makers. Each station had to be supplied with extra teams, to be used in case of loss from raids or other losses incident to the perils of a thousand miles of wilderness. In July, 1861, the line was run from St. Joseph to California, and the first coach left St. Joseph July 1, 1861, and reached Placerville, Cal., in eighteen days, schedule time; and on the 18th day of July, 1861, the first coach from California reached St. Joseph, carrying the first through passenger, Maj. J. W. Simonton, one of the editors of the San Francisco *Bulletin*. As General Hughes aptly said, it solved the problem of overland transportation and was the *avant courier* of the great railroad line.

"The hostility of the Sioux, the difficulty of obtaining supplies and the thousand perils incident to floods, snows, Indians and road-agents rendered this one of the most stupendous enterprises of the present century, and a man of less courage, energy and capacity than General Hughes would have signally failed. In 1862 Ben. Holladay bought the C. O. C. & P. P. and obtained an increased subsidy from the Government and added additional lines—one to Virginia City, Mont., and one to Boise City, Idaho—until the mileage of the company amounted to 3300 miles, and the main lines were made triweekly and some of them daily. The discovery of gold in Montana and Idaho was the saving of Holladay from utter ruin. The Indians and road-agents were factions which added a hundred per cent. to the expenses. The half-breed French and 'squaw men' (as whites who lived with the Indians were called) were the only settlers except at Government posts, and were constantly warring on the company by raids on its stock and supplies and pilfering to trade with the wild Indians. Scattered over the country were small bands of desperadoes from Texas, Arkansas, Kansas, etc., ostensibly hunting buffalo for their hides, but really to steal stock, rob the stages and passengers, and sometimes murder was added as a fitting pastime. The famous Slade, who had been promoted from clerk to a supply train to division agent at Julesburg, made war upon these men in the protection of the company's interest. They waylaid and shot him and left him for dead. When told he must die, he swore he would live for revenge, and at the end of six months he got up and proceeded to keep his oath, and actually took the lives of eleven of them. Habits of dissipation grew with his blood letting, until the company discharged him, and he went to Montana and became a road-agent, one of the characters he had been so fierce in fighting, and ended his life in the hands of Judge Lynch, at Virginia City. It was but a short step from a trusted employee to the life of a desperado.

"Holladay sold out the line in 1866 to Wells, Fargo & Co., who continued to run the main line until the Pacific railroad was finished; dropping off from station to station as the road was finished from either end, until 1869, when the completed lines met in Utah. The lines to Montana and Idaho were continued about ten years longer, until the routes were covered by railroad-tracks. Wells, Fargo & Co. still continue to run routes through the mountains, but the glamour and zest of the olden times have passed, and the heroes who made the plains awaken to the life and light of civilization are gone to hunting-grounds, mostly with their boots on. A few are peacefully passing the remnant of well-spent lives unappreciated by the great West for which they did so much.

"James M. Bromley started at Weston in 1849 as stage agent, and went into the service of the 'Overland' in 1850 and continued until 1867, in about every capacity as a trusted servitor, in Utah, raising his family, and in odd months serving in the legislature of the territory, trying to formulate the blessings of law from the chaos in which he was so long a prominent actor.

Mr. Doniphan published another letter, in the St. Joseph *Catholic Tribune*, June 22, 1895, of such value to our subject that we print it entire. Aside from information about Mr. Holladay, it is a valuable contribution to the history of the West.

"In your paper of June 1 there is an article about Weston being an old town and a sketch of its palmy days. I do not desire to rush into print for notoriety, but there are several errors in it which I believe should be corrected, on account of Weston being the home of many young people who must be informed by their elders.

"Weston is dear to me as the home of my youth and happiest days. It contains the ashes of my children and my good lady, and I hope to be interred in its lovely cemetery, which I did much to obtain and get in shape forty-two years since.

"Weston has been the home of many distinguished men whose memories should be cherished and their characters fairly represented; among others, Gen. Andrew S. Hughes, Ben. Holladay, their relative Frank P. Blair, Gov. Peter H. Burnett, Gen. J. W. Denver, Col. J. M. Estill, Gen. B. F. Stringfellow, L. M. Lawson, and many other distinguished men, besides hundreds of good and honorable citizens, equal to the noblemen of nature in any country or clime.

"The article is an excellent one in many of its recitals and contains many truthful incidents; but I know Mr. Howe has been misled in some facts and has left a wrong impression of many others. Weston never contained over 3200 citizens who were permanent residents. Emigrants bound for California, in 1849, settlers waiting for Kansas to open and discharged soldiers sometimes swelled the population several hundred. In 1848 there were 1700 soldiers discharged at Fort Leavenworth. Most of them flocked to Weston, but soon scattered, and but few remained longer than a few months. In 1854 several hundred families were left at Weston until homes could be prepared in Kansas.

"For many years Weston was the head of navigation, and until 1849 it was the stopping-point of two-thirds of the steamboats on the Missouri. I was there in 1846, and know of people coming from St. Joseph, Council Bluffs and Savannah to take a boat at Weston. The railroad was commenced from Weston to St. Joseph in 1859, and completed April 1, 1861.

"John Brown never was a prisoner at Weston, but John Doy was, in 1859. Charles A. Perry, one of the most enterprising men Weston ever had, and a liberal one, is living in St. Joseph with his children, and does not need to peddle vegetables—a sunstroke should shield him from ridicule.

"The better class of people in Weston were not given to fist fights, but generally used knives or pistols, as in other parts of the West, the only exception being, as far as I can recollect in my twenty-five years' residence, was the fight between Joseph Holladay and J. F. Baker, both merchants, and which led to the fight between Ben. Holladay and George W. Dye, a few days later, as represented by Mr. Howe. I never knew a fight at a ball or between the country or town boys at any time or place, and I attended most of them for several years. The young men of Weston were examples of good morals and good behavior, as is evidenced to-day by their filling places of honor and trust from New York to the Pacific coast. I have met them in New York, Cincinnati, St. Louis, Colorado, Montana, Salt Lake, Idaho, and California, and they were always endeared to Weston and proud of her, and she may well be proud of most of them.

"The rabble there did fill up on fifteen-cent whisky and have frequent and terrible fist fights, but seldom was there any one much hurt. Sometimes an unfortunate farmer who had imbibed too much got a broken head, but some doctor would plaster it up and prescribe another drink, as the hair of the dog is good for the bite.

"I was present and witnessed the entire fight between Ben. Holladay and George W. Dye, and I never heard of the charge of Dye stealing ten dollars, and do not believe he ever did, or that Holladay ever said so. Both have passed the grand stand, but each have left respectable descendants.

"But my chief object in writing this is to do justice to Benjamin Holladay's memory. He had his home in Weston from 1839 to 1859, and was a character of whom the city of Weston may well be proud. He was without much education. He came to Liberty, Mo., in 1837, aged sixteen years, from Nicholas county, Kentucky, was of Virginian ancestry, and was connected by blood with the famous Hughes family of that state. He had faults of disposition and education, but he was brave, strong, aggressive, talented, and generous. The history of the man reads like a fable.

"At the age of nineteen he came to Weston to clerk in a store, but it was too slow; at twenty he married and started a hotel; at twenty-three he was postmaster, and the Hugheses helped him to start a drug-store, in 1846. His personal magnetism enabled him to get contracts at Fort Leavenworth for wagons, bacon, flour, horses, mules, etc., to start Kearney's regulars and Doniphan's regiment to Santa Fé. Time was of more importance than money, and his celerity in obtaining these things on the then frontier also enabled him to make 200 per cent. on what he supplied, and gave him the position as the favorite contractor at Fort Leavenworth during the entire war with Mexico, and at the end of the war he bought, in the fall of 1848 and the spring of 1849, a large amount of Government war material, oxen, wagons, etc., at a small price, and by this time he was known as a business man of much promise and some wealth.

"In February, 1849, he and Theodore F. Warner, one of God's noblemen, formed a partnership to trade to Salt Lake. The goods were bought on Warner's credit; the wagons and oxen were mostly furnished by Holladay. They made a good deal of money by that enterprise, and Ben. Holladay never mistreated Warner in any respect. I was the attorney for both of them ten years, and for Warner twenty.

"In 1855 Holladay and myself had a misunderstanding, and were never good friends afterwards; but I think I can do justice to his good traits. He did not die poor, but left about $300,000, so I have been informed, and a just claim against the Government for a half-million. He never had a mortgage on Warner's home, as I bought it in 1853 at private sale for $3200 and moved into it. When I moved into the house Warner went to California and took charge of the finances of the firm and remained nearly two years, and sold out to Holladay at about $40,000 and brought the money home in the fall of 1855, and lost it on hemp in the next five years, together with heavy security debts he had to pay for others.

"I read letters from Holladay to Warner in 1867 from Salem, Ore., recalling the kindness of Warner, offering him sympathy and assistance, proposing if he would come to Oregon to join him in building the Oregon & California railroad and manage the finances, out of which he expected to realize $3,000,000, that he should have a large amount of the profits. This road proved to be Holladay's Waterloo. He opened a hotel at Salem, possessed himself of a majority of the legislature, elected his own senator, expecting to succeed to the position himself, bought ships, obtained a land grant from the legislature of thousands of acres of the best lands; he issued millions in bonds and sold them in Europe; his ships sent there failed to procure immigrants as expected; his railroad bonds ripened coupons before the lands would sell or before the immigrants arrived, and he undertook to pay the interest as it matured out of his private fortune. Sherman's bill had passed in 1869 to pay all Government debts in gold, and Holladay was paying thirty per cent. to satisfy the greed of the bondholders. It broke him. The advance of property at Portland left something at his death, after paying his debts.

"He was squandering a million on a house and a thousand acres on the Hudson. His wonderful nerve and activity enabled him to struggle along until the panic of 1873 dried up the Pactolian streams he had controlled; and, although badly handicapped with debt, in 1877, when Congress offered him $100,000 for his claim for losses by the Indians in 1864 and 1865, he rejected it, saying if the United States was not able to pay its debts he would give it his claim. He immediately left Washington and never went back.

"Many anecdotes of his liberality and courage could be given by me. I wrote to him the Baptist ladies wished him to sell them at a low price the International Hotel lot that had cost him $12,000, the buildings having burned down, and, although he was a Catholic in faith, he wrote me to make out a deed, and that he would *give* it to them.

"Uncle John Woods is mistaken about his selling Mr. Warner's home. It was years later that he sold some lots of Mr. Warner's, and then it was not for debts due Holladay.

"It is due to the truth of history to correct the impression which wrongs both of these old and time-honored citizens of Weston. I regard Ben. Holladay as one of nature's gifted children. Had he been on the same theater, he was capable of playing the rôle of Napoleon, as I think he resembled him in many characteristics. He believed results justified means, and he trusted in his star too far. Haughty and dictatorial, he was the most companionable of men, and would always cheerfully undergo more than his share of the discomforts or personal sacrifices.

"Anxious to get the best of every bargain, he would often turn it, with all the profits, to some friend or deserving man. Reckless as to his own or others' lives, he was a sympathetic nurse and grateful friend. In the early California days he was on a wrecked steamship on the Pacific and narrowly escaped with his life, and although he owned and operated sixteen steamships he would never afterwards ride on one, not so much from fear of accident as a dread of wreck; for he said he suffered a hundred deaths in seeing the terror and suffering of the lady passengers and the cowardly men on that wreck during the three days they waited for relief.

"He was the first Gentile trader to the Mormons. He had a letter from Gen. A. W. Doniphan, to whom Joseph Smith and Brigham Young surrendered at Far West, in 1838, reciting that Holladay, as a boy, had been one of his orderlies at that surrender, and had then expressed sympathy for them, and had helped to render the condition of the women and children more comfortable after the leaders had been imprisoned.

"Brigham Young received him, blessed him, and stated in his sermon at the Tabernacle the following Sunday that 'Brother Holladay had a large stock of goods for sale, and could be trusted as an honorable dealer.' That speech was worth thousands of dollars to him, and it is said that he joined the Mormon church (only on probation, however).

"Coming home in the fall, he started with three mules and a negro man to find a new road from Salt Lake to Fort Bridger, and wandered in the mountains for several days without food, and was saved from starvation by finding a broken-down buffalo that furnished, he said, the sweetest morsel he had ever tasted.

"In 1850 he traded his goods for cattle, drove them to California, fattened them on the Sacramento bottom, and sold them to the Panama Steamship Company at a large profit. First he sold a small lot, but wished to sell more and at a larger price. The superintendent of the company sent for him, and he answered that he did not have time, but that they must come to him. They did, and made a contract for thirty cents a pound on foot. He said afterwards that he would have crawled on his knees to their office when he had refused to go, but that he had kept informed that they were short of beef and the market bare, and that if they came to him it would be worth five cents a pound.

"To get his compensation increased for carrying the mail, he rode in one of his stages from Salt Lake to Atchison in eight days, the route then being estimated on the line traveled at 1300 miles.

"He was opposed to his children marrying foreigners, but was gratified that his son married a country girl in California.

"His life showed the elasticity of American institutions: At fifteen, laboring on a farm in the mountains of Kentucky; at forty, owned sixteen steamships, trading to every point of the Pacific; building a castle on the Hudson; children married to noblemen—all the result of his own talent and enterprise.

"Amid all his exaltation he sent sums of money to relieve his many friends at Weston. He had faults, but desertion of friends was not one of them; and old settlers of Weston may well remember him as an old settler, respectable for talent and generosity."

The following letter from R. M. Johnson, Esq., of Belton, Mo., the brother-in-law of Mr. Holladay, will be of interest to many of our readers:

"Belton, Mo., April 11, 1901.

"*William E. Connelley, Esq., Topeka, Kan.:*

"Dear Sir—Your favor of the 4th inst. received, and I have noted your request in reference to giving you narratives of the life of Ben. Holladay. I cannot give you anything much in reference to his early life. I know he was born in Kentucky; I think Jessamine county. He emigrated to Missouri in a very early day, I think in 1836 or 1837, and took up his residence at Weston, Platte county, and engaged in the drug and liquor business and traded extensively with the Indians, who then occupied all the territory of Kansas, just across the river from Weston. Holladay was a man of daring, speculative turn of mind; therefore his little drug business did not claim his attention very long. He soon commenced trading with Government authorities at Fort Leavenworth, and was very soon engaged in large Government contracts for mules, oxen, etc., and made a good deal of money.

"When the California gold fever broke out, he was quick to fit out large trains of merchandise, and, with his partner, Hon. Theo. F. Warner, long since dead, start across the plains. This enterprise made him large sums of money. On his arrival at Sacramento, Cal., he either built or bought several small steamboats and plied up and down the Sacramento river, trading and trafficking provisions and staple groceries and such other things as the miners in those days required. He made considerable money in his California enterprises.

"He returned to Platte county, Missouri, some time in the '50's and commenced to invest some of his means in fine farms, and improving them. He bought a large farm — I think about 1700 acres — and a fine water-mill on Platte river, paying several thousand dollars for them, and, I think, lived on the farm about one year. It was too tame a life for him, though; he soon quit it and went to St. Louis, Mo., and commenced speculating in any big deals that presented themselves to his mind as good money-making investments.

"He left St. Louis about 1859 or 1860 and purchased himself a fine brown-stone house on Fifth avenue, New York, and established an office at 88 Wall street. Soon thereafter he bought from William H. Russell his pony express, which he was then running probably only to Salt Lake City. Holladay soon merged it into a full-fledged stage line, and from thence on conducted and managed the finest line of coaches ever run in America. This line left Atchison, Kan., and ran through to San Francisco, Cal., and made close and accurate time. Holladay had a large number of men and stock engaged in this mammoth enterprise. It was certainly a great and daring undertaking at this time, but he carried it on successfully and made large sums of money out of it. He at this time also owned and ran a line of splendid ocean steamers on the Pacific ocean, running from San Francisco, Cal., to Portland, Ore., and other points on the Pacific coast.

"Holladay soon commenced buying land out in Westchester county, New York, and at the time I went to New York to live with him he owned something liked 400 acres on the renowned Bronx river, near White Plains. He soon after commenced building his celebrated castle, known then and now as 'Ophir Place' or 'Ophir Farm.' Whitelaw Reid afterward purchased and now owns and occupies the 'castle' or 'palace.' It is one of the celebrated places in New York.

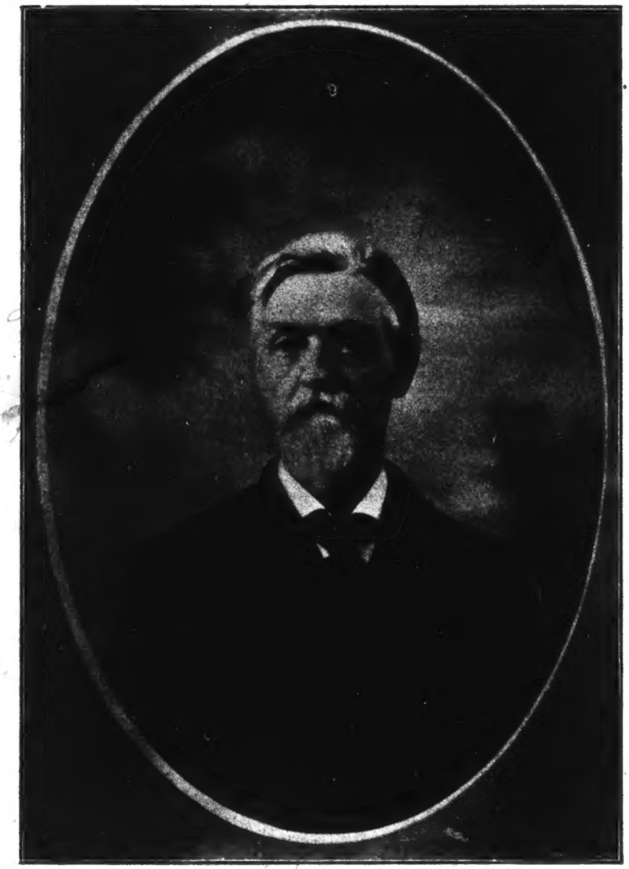
"Mr. Holladay married his first wife, Miss Notley Ann Calvert, in Platte county, Missouri, about the year 1842, I think. Her parents were very much opposed to their marriage. They eloped and were married at my father's house — Capt. Andrew Johnson — who was uncle of the bride. They were married in a log cabin, as sure as you live. Mrs. Holladay died on 'Ophir Farm' and is buried in the chapel. They had four children — two boys and two girls. Mrs. Holladay was a very ambitious women and made several voyages across the Atlantic, and spent much of her time at Paris and Berlin, and finally married her daughters off to titled gentry — one to a baron and the other to a count — and they were both *no counts*. His sons, Ben. and Joe, grew up to be men. Ben., the oldest, proved to be quite a business man in San Francisco and made considerable money. Joe was a miserable drunkard, and died in Hongkong, China. Mr. Holladay married his second wife in Portland, Ore., and, I think, had one child by her. She is probably living there yet. Holladay died there several years ago, comparatively poor. I knew nothing of him after his second marriage. His first wife and my wife were sisters. He has one brother, living in Chicago, Ill., Jesse Holladay, and another brother, Dr. Andrew Holladay, living in Nebraska, probably in Nebraska City. If you would communicate with either, I know they would be pleased to assist you in your history.

"Ben. Holladay was a great man. There was nothing too big for him to undertake. Mentally he was a big man and a very creditable man. He loved to play a game of 'draw' as well as any man I ever knew, but drank very little liquor. His whole soul and mind were bent on accumulating wealth.

"If I can be of any further service to you please notify me what you want, and if I can supply it am at your command.

Yours respectfully, R. M. Johnson."

A noted Rocky Mountain mail coach.



DAVID STREET,
Paymaster of the Overland Stage Line,
the Holladay Overland Mail and Express Company,
and the Wells, Fargo & Co. Express.
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CHAPTER XX.

SOME OF THE OLD PIONEERS.

FOR more than three-quarters of a century ALEXANDER MAJORS was on the frontier, and for many years was one of the most conspicuous of the Western pioneers. He was born in Kentucky in 1814, but crossed the Mississippi when a little boy, and visited St. Louis in 1818, then a city of only 4000 inhabitants. Fond of adventure, as he grew up he desired to see something of the great West, and, at an early day, he crossed the plains and got his first glimpse of the Rocky Mountains when a young man. For years he was a member of the well-known freighting firm of Russell, Majors & Waddell, who owned a vast number of oxen, mules and horses and many thousands of wagons, which were utilized in the overland traffic. To this firm, in 1857–'59, was let by the Government the largest contract ever given out by "Uncle Sam" for overland transportation by wagons from the Missouri river to the military posts in the West as far out as Salt Lake City, Utah. For the year 1858, the freight contracted by the Government aggregated 16,000,000 pounds, requiring from 3500 to 4000 wagons, near 40,000 oxen, 1000 mules, and between 4000 and 5000 men. Besides the Government freight, they transported a great deal of freight for post traders and mercantile firms in Salt Lake City and, later on, in Denver.

For years before railroads on the plains, the firm did an immense business freighting for Government from Fort Leavenworth, having transported Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston's army across the country to Utah in 1857–'58. For nearly fifty years, his name west of the Missouri river was as familiar as household words. For four decades he was a very intimate friend of Col. Wm. F. Cody ("Buffalo Bill"), whom he took into his employ when a mere boy, and before he had reached his teens.

Mr. Majors's early association with the overland mail; the part he took in establishing the Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express; his prominence in operating the California pony express; his connection with the great overland freighting business on the plains, and his romantic and exciting experiences in the West are interwoven with events full of thrilling interest.

Before he was five years old his father moved to Missouri and settled on a tract of land in the wilderness. Alexander Majors quit ranch life after he married, and then began the plan for the establishment of the gigantic freighting business from the Missouri river across the "Great American Desert" to the New Mexican capital, on the old Santa Fé trail. This traffic steadily increased and grew to be immense, extending from Fort Leavenworth to the Pacific slope, over the old Salt Lake trail. In his employ often there was an army of 5000 men and the number of oxen and mules reached far into the thousands.

ALEXANDER MAJORS.

It was a hazardous business—freighting—in those early days, on account of the Indians. The firm of Russell, Majors & Waddell had famous scouts of their own; such well-known men as Kit Carson, Bill Comstock and California Joe being in their employ. While the vast business kept Mr. Majors on the plains much of the time forty to fifty years ago, young Cody rode as a "boy extra" messenger, going into the service of the firm when only eleven years old. He carried dispatches from the office in Leavenworth to the trains *en route.* As soon as a wagon-train was loaded it pulled out for its long journey, the wagon-master being told that his train-book (covering the accounts of his men, inventory of his outfit, equipment, and supplies, and manifest, or duplicate bill of lading and instructions) would be sent to him before he was many days out by special messenger.

Mr. Majors was always a man of sterling convictions and unusual public spirit. He made many trips across the plains and the so-called "Great American Desert" long before Denver was ever dreamed of. He saw the Colorado metropolis and capital city of the Centennial state grow from a small mining camp of a few log shanties and tents to a magnificent city with a population of more than 150,000. He saw the arid lands between western Kansas and the Rocky Mountains "blossom as the rose" and practically become a land "flowing with milk and honey." The greater part of his life after he first saw the West was spent on the frontier. He lived for some years in Leavenworth, where the noted firm with which he was so long connected had its headquarters; he also lived in Kansas City, and in California. In his last years his home was in Denver.

After railroads came, the vocation of the firm of which Mr. Majors was a member ended. His last years were spent on the ranch and in writing, mining and other enterprises. In 1893 he published an entertaining book, entitled "Seventy Years on the Frontier," which has had an extensive sale.

In the early part of winter in 1899 he went to Chicago to visit some friends, and while there contracted pneumonia, and never recovered. His old and so long intimate friend, Colonel Cody, spent several days with the aged pioneer in his last illness, being at his bedside when he breathed his last, December 15, 1899. Two grandchildren of the octogenarian, R. D. Simpson and Miss Grace Poteet, of Kansas City, were also with him when he passed from earth to the "great beyond." His remains were taken to Kansas City, where he had spent so many years of his life when the now great commercial metropolis at the mouth of of the Kaw was a little town of only a few log shanties.

Thomas M. Patterson, editor of the daily *Rocky Mountain News*, of Denver, Colo., in the issue of January 24, 1900, printed the following tribute to the memory of his departed friend:

"When ALEXANDER MAJORS, as a child, crossed the Mississippi at St. Louis in an old scow, that place was a mere frontier village. He lived to see it become a great commercial city; to see the great river spanned by a splendid bridge and crossed daily by hundreds of railway-trains; to see civilization advance from the Mississippi to the Missouri, from the Missouri to the mountains, and thence to the Pacific; in brief, to see the frontier wiped out and the continent become a chain of states from ocean to ocean.

"In the progress of the last half-century Alexander Majors was a prominent and influential factor. He had a natural genius for transportation. He was early on the Santa Fé trail as a freighter, and he became a pioneer in the carrying trade of Colorado and the territories beyond. The pony express and the overland stage lines originated in his active brain, and these were the forerunners of the Union and Central Pacific roads. When steel rails spanned the continent, the triumph was due not less to Alexander Majors than to the financial daring and enterprise of those who actually constructed the roads. Majors had made the trails and demonstrated the feasibility of overland traffic.

"With the era of railroads and telegraphs Alexander Majors passed out of the public vision, but he lost none of his interest in the progress of the West. He took an honest pride in the part he had played as a pioneer. A man of great vigor and vitality, and of a cheerful disposition, he took a happy view of life, although he knew that because of advancing years his work was done. Few men enjoyed more largely the confidence of all classes with whom he was associated in business, and few have ever more thoroughly deserved it. He was honest, upright, energetic, enterprising, and far-sighted, and these qualities, as they were actually displayed, will place his name high among those who have carried westward the flag of the republic and planted the germs of civilization in the nation's Rocky Mountain empire."

It seems fitting, and it is doubtless as gratifying to his relatives as it is to his army of friends and admirers, scattered far and wide, to learn that, through the efforts of Joseph A. Thatcher, president of the Denver National Bank, Henry M. Porter, David Street, and a number of others who had known him so long, a picture in stained glass, to perpetuate the memory of the remarkable pioneer and aged plainsman and esteemed citizen, is placed in the dome of the new Colorado state capitol, at Denver.

GEN. BÉLA M. HUGHES, for a third of a century an eminent lawyer in Denver, was, most of the time during the '60's, one of the prominent men associated with the great stage line. When residing in St. Joseph he became president and general counsel for the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company, in March, 1861, having succeeded Mr. William H. Russell, its former president. When the line was sold under a mortgage foreclosure to Ben. Holladay, early in 1862, at Atchison, a reorganization was at once effected and General Hughes became its general counsel. The name of the enterprise, however, was changed by Holladay to the "Overland Stage Line." General Hughes was continued as the general counsel for the newly organized company, and served in this capacity until the line had been purchased, in the later '60's, by Wells, Fargo & Co. This noted express company retained him, and continued to operate the line until a railroad was built across the plains. Thus General Hughes held this important position until the pioneer transcontinental railway took the place of the old Concord stage,

BELA M. HUGHES,

General Counsel for the Overland Stage Line.

which ran so many years between the Missouri river and Denver, Salt Lake, and California, when he resumed the general practice of law at Denver. He was elected the first president and general counsel of the Denver & Pacific railway (the first railway to enter Denver), in July, 1870. Later he was general counsel for the Denver & South Park railroad and a member of the last territorial legislature.

General Hughes was born in Kentucky, educated at Augusta College, and removed with his parents at an early date to Liberty, Mo. He was a member of the Missouri legislature, prosecuting attorney, and receiver of the United States land-office at Plattsburg, Mo., locating thereafter at St. Joseph, Mo., and, while living there, was engaged in the practice of law with Governor Woodson. In his early youth he was a soldier in the Black Hawk war, serving with the Missouri volunteers.

In the early '60's he was a resident of Atchison, so long the headquarters and eastern starting-point of the overland stage line. He took up his residence in Denver in the later '60's, going there when the city had less than 5000 inhabitants. Since he cast his lot in Denver and became a citizen of Colorado he has been thoroughly identified with the unparalleled growth of his adopted state and of the great city at the eastern base of the Rocky Mountains, which he has seen rise from a few shanties to one of the most metropolitan places of its size in the country. In the summer of 1899 General Hughes and his second wife celebrated, in Denver, the fiftieth anniversary of their marriage. The general is now (1901) eighty-four years old, and, for one of his advanced age, in pretty good health. It is the wish of his hosts of friends scattered all over the country that he may live to celebrate his century birthday.

David Street was one of the most prominent men on the overland line. He was born at Prairie du Chien, Wis., May 24, 1837. His father, Gen. Joseph M. Street, was a Virginian by birth, who at an early age removed to Frankfort, Ky., and there, in 1806, edited and published the eleventh newspaper established in Kentucky, and was prominently connected with the stirring events of the Burr conspiracy, taking sides against Burr, and denouncing him in his paper as a conspirator. General Street was afterwards appointed agent for the Winnebagoes and

Sac and Fox tribes, located on the upper Mississippi river at Fort Crawford, near Prairie du Chien, and later removed the Sac and Fox Indians to Iowa. He established the agency near the Des Moines river, in what afterwards became Wapello county, and removed his family to that agency and continued as agent for the Sac and Fox Indians until his death, in 1840.

After the removal of the Indians to the Raccoon agency, where Des Moines is now located, the Street family remained in Wapello county, David's brothers locating lands and engaging in mercantile and other pursuits. David Street's boyhood was passed in that section at school, and later on as a clerk in his brothers' stores, for his brothers had a line of stores—four in all—in that and adjoining counties.

It was customary in those days for the merchants to buy the hogs of the farmers on foot and drive them to the Mississippi river, where they were marketed; and every fall, generally late in November or early in December, the droves were collected and driven to the Mississippi river at Keokuk. They drove from 3000 to 4000 hogs in a season. Although a boy in his teens, he assisted in weighing up and paying for the hogs, and at other times collected for the different stores, going from one store to another on business rounds, sometimes in a buggy but generally on horseback, so that he had an early experience of active business and frontier life. He said after he became the paymaster for the overland mail line that his early experience in Iowa was very useful to him in performing the duties of paymaster.

He left Iowa in 1857 and went to Jackson county, Missouri, and, in the spring of 1858, was employed by Alexander Majors (of the firm of Russell, Majors & Waddell) as bookkeeper to go to Camp Floyd, Utah, where the immense supplies that the firm transported for the Utah expedition were delivered. It was at Camp Floyd, in connection with some of the large business transactions of the firm, that he made the acquaintance of Ben. Holladay, who recognized his business qualifications and soon after appointed him paymaster of the overland stage line. For over three years he held this position, and was afterwards paymaster and general agent of the Holladay Overland Mail and Express Company until that company sold out to Wells, Fargo & Co. This firm retained him in the same position until the line was wiped out by the completion of the Union and Central Pacific railroads. He was the best known of all the army of employees on the great stage line. He was a pioneer in Kansas, coming while it was a territory.

He crossed the plains from Fort Leavenworth to Salt Lake City in the spring of 1858, when about twenty-one years old. Among those going along were the general agent for the company and several clerks and other attaches, who formed a considerable party. They traveled with ambulances and saddle animals and had some three or four weeks the start of him. Going by steamboat up the Missouri river from Fort Leavenworth to Nebraska City, he there procured pack animals for the journey overland. Taking one man, he started out across the country to overtake and join the general agent and party. He made the trip of 650 miles from Nebraska City to Fort Laramie in thirteen days, without change of animals. There he overtook the general agent and party, and proceeded with them to Camp Floyd (forty miles south of Salt Lake), the headquarters of the army in Utah, under command of Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, where also were the headquarters of the Government contractors.

On the 1st of May, 1862, he was employed by Ben. Holladay, who some time previous had recognized his abilities. At Salt Lake, on June 17, 1862, Mr. Holladay appointed him paymaster of the overland stage line, and from that time until the completion of the Pacific railroad he was constantly on the road and the busiest man on the stage route. His duties required his presence on the line almost continually. Four times a year, at the end of each quarter, he had to pass over the entire system—main line and branches, from Atchison to California, and to Idaho, Montana, and Oregon—making the usual settlements. During all the Indian troubles and at all seasons these quarterly trips and payments were promptly made by the paymaster.

There was not another man in the employ of the stage company who had ridden over the line so much as David Street. As an employee he was capable, efficient, and honest. His task was a laborious and difficult one. Notwithstanding he had a number of narrow escapes, he was always at his post and never shirked a duty. If he had an enemy on the line no one ever knew it. No man employed was better fitted for the trying work he so long and faithfully performed. In fact, there was no position on the great stage line that he was not in every way qualified for filling.

In the performance of his duties he was gentlemanly, and polite in his manners, temperate, and free from vices. He neither indulged in profanity nor used vulgar slang, and his honor and integrity were always above suspicion.

Following is a telegram which shows the difficulties frequently encountered in the transportation of the overland mail, express and passengers in early days:

"OMAHA, March 23, 1867.

"*A. Benham, Denver:* Snow blockade again on U. P. R. R. No train has gone west since Wednesday, and that is reported snowed in at Kearney. On that train there is large amount of mail and passengers and now mail accumulating here and forty passengers. When these reach North Platte, use every exertion to get them off with as little delay as possible; put in extra men and stock for the emergency. Get mail and passengers off before anything else. I will go up on first train. D. STREET."

NAT. STEIN[*] began work as an "Overlander" March 1, 1861, at St. Joseph, Mo., where he was employed by the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company, first going on the line as a messenger to Denver; afterwards on temporary duty in the St. Joseph office; then as agent in Central City, Colo., until the line changed hands the following spring and passed into the control of Ben. Holladay. About the same time he was placed in charge of the agency at Denver, and, early in 1863, was transferred to the Salt Lake City office. Holladay having secured, in May, 1864, the first Government contract for mail service in Montana, Mr. Stein was sent by him to take charge of the office at Virginia City, where he represented the stage line in all its branches, including the banking department.

In October, 1865, as he was about leaving Montana on a visit to his home in the East, he became troubled with a serious affliction of the eyelids, and this caused him to be detained in Philadelphia under treatment of eminent specialists until July, 1867.

In the meantime Wells, Fargo & Co. had bought all of Mr. Holladay's "Overland" interests and were operating the great mail and express line, and had entered into large contracts for carrying Government freights from the Union Pacific railway, then in course of construction, to the military posts of the West. Mr. Stein making application for work, later, he was given the agency at Omaha, which became combined soon after, by mutual agreement, with the agencies at that place of the American and United States Express Companies. The joint office was carried on by Mr. Stein until October, 1868, when, fearing the work was ruining his eyes, he gave it up, whereupon he was placed on duty by Wells, Fargo & Co. again, in his old place at Salt Lake City.

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[*] See portrait on page 75.

Some months afterward he concluded to try the effects of a change in his calling. He drifted to the Pacific coast and has followed the banking business ever since; being connected with the same well-known organization—Wells, Fargo & Co.—in San Francisco, and in constant touch with agreeable reminders of the good old days of the pony express and the overland stage line.

While engaged with the "Overland," Mr. Stein was very popular with all the employees on the route. He was a gentleman, and in every way a genial-hearted fellow; honest, upright and courteous in all business relations, thoroughly capable and efficient in the discharge of his duties, and he had abilities which qualified him for filling any position in the gift of the stage officials. The drivers and other employees greatly admired him. He was always sociable and on the stage route had become known as quite a literary character—called by many "the poet of the stage line." His productions had merit, and he frequently wrote verses for the amusement of the boys. The following, which was written by him, appeared in the *Montana Post*, April 8, 1865, and, for some time afterward, was sung by the army of stage boys to the tune of "The High Salary Driver on the Denver City Line":

SONG OF THE OVERLAND STAGE-DRIVER.

I sing to everybody, in the country and the town,
A song upon a subject that 's worthy of renown;
I have n't got a story of fairy-land to broach,
But plead for the cause of sticking to the box seat of a coach.

Chorus.

Statesmen and warriors, traders and the rest,
May boast of their profession, and think it is the best;
Their state I 'll never envy, I 'll have you understand,
Long as I can be a driver on the jolly "Overland."

There 's beauty never ending, for me, upon the plains,
That 's worth a man's beholding, at any cost of pains;
And in the Indian country it offers me a fund
Of glee to see the antelopes and prairie-dogs abscond.

The mountains and the canons in turn afford delight,
As often as I pass them, by day or in the night;
That man must be a ninny who 'd bury up alive
When all it costs to revel through creation is to drive.

Alike are all the seasons and weathers, to my mind;
Nor heat nor cold can daunt me, or make me lag behind.
In daylight and in darkness, through rain and shine and snow,
It 's my confirmed ambition to be up and on the go.

You ask me for our leader; I 'll soon inform you, then;
It 's Holladay they call him, and often only Ben.;
If you can read the papers, it 's easy work to scan
He beats the world on staging now, "or any other man."

And so you must allow me, the agent at his books,
And selling passage tickets, how woebegone he looks!
'T would cause his eyes to twinkle, his drooping heart revive,
Could he but hold the ribbons and obtain a chance to drive.

The sup'rintendent, even, though big a chief he be,
Would find it quite a poser to swap off berths with me;
And if division agents, though clever coves and fine,
Should make me such an offer, you can gamble I 'd decline.

The station-keepers nimble and messengers so gay
Have duties of importance, and please me every way;
But never let them fancy, for anything alive,
I 'd take their situations and give up to them my drive.

And then the trusty fellows who tend upon the stock,
And do the horses justice, as reg'lar as a clock,
I love them late and early, and wish them well to thrive,
But theirs is not my mission, for I 'm bound, you see, to drive.

A truce to these distinctions, since all the hands incline
To stick up for their business, as I stick up for mine;
And, like a band of brothers, our efforts we unite
To please the traveling public and the mails to expedite.

It 's thus you 're safely carried throughout the mighty West,
Where chances to make fortunes are ever found the best;
And thus the precious pouches of mail are brought to hand
Through the ready hearts that center on the jolly "Overland."

Robert L. Pease, one of the pioneers of Atchison (see portrait, p. 75), was a faithful and trusted employee on the overland line. Before Ben. Holladay secured control, and while the line was operated as the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company, in 1861, and had become largely indebted to Holladay for money advanced them, in the fall of that year the company conveyed to Theo. F. Warner, of Weston, Mo., and R. L. Pease, of Atchison, as trustees, all their real and personal property on their several lines, to secure the indebtedness to Holladay. The company failing to make its payments to Holladay, he called on the trustees to take possession of the property and operate it for his benefit, and advertise a day on which it would be sold by them. Mr. Warner declined to act with Mr. Pease in operating the line, and the latter took possession as trustee on December 6, 1861, and published a notice fixing a date on which he would sell the property. The old company obtained an injunction in the United States court, restraining Mr. Pease from selling it on the date advertised; hence the date of sale was postponed from time to time, until finally the injunction was dissolved, when, on March 21, 1862, in front of the old Massasoit House, at Atchison, the whole property was sold at public auction by the trustees and bought by Ben. Holladay, the sum paid being $150,000.*

On the day of sale Holladay became the sole owner of the property, and there was an immediate reorganization. He afterwards operated the enterprise as the "Overland Stage Line." Mr. Pease was kept busy during the spring and summer of 1862 in settling up his business and paying the numerous bills as trustee for the time he was operating the line. In the fall of 1862 he was sent to Denver, upon the earnest request and appointment by Holladay, as agent in charge of the business at that place and of the branch lines beyond there, remaining in the service of the "Overland" until 1864.

Mr. Pease died at Atchison, Kan., in the spring of 1901.

Andrew S. Hughes, so long the efficient traffic manager of the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad Company, was one of the pióneers in the service of the overland stage line. He engaged with the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company in July, 1861, immediately following the beginning of the first daily overland mail service between the Missouri river and the Pacific coast. He received his first lessons in the overland express and stage business in the Denver office, under the veteran, Henry Carlyle, to whose desk he later succeeded. Employed in the office at Denver at the time were W. R. Likins, agent, Judge Steck, Billy McClelland, and Alfred Lockwood. Gen. Bela M. Hughes, general counsel for the stage company, and father of the subject of this sketch, "routed out" his son in 1862 and sent him back East to college, where he remained until 1863, when he returned to the West and was soon back on the plains, where he remained until 1864. In the meantime he was assistant agent in the office in Atchison at odd times, being a very useful man, capable of filling any position connected with the stage line. Later he joined John Hughes, Robert J. Spotswood and Amos Bissell in the purchase of the remnant of Wells, Fargo & Co.'s overland line; that is, all that was left of staging in Colorado. After the railroad had penetrated the so-called "Great American Desert" and was running cars into Denver, in the summer of 1870, that part of the overland stage line extending east to the Missouri river was wiped out and the remaining mountain routes were disposed of to Messrs. McClelland & Spotswood.

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*But that did not represent the whole amount paid, for Holladay liquidated a large number of debts that he assumed, to prevent litigation. He paid a considerable amount to employees that he was not legally held for, to obtain peaceable possession of the property. As it was, some of the old employees of the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company helped themselves to stock and outfit and went west with them, saying that they were taking them for payment of indebtedness.

The career of Mr. Hughes has been a busy one since he first went on the frontier and engaged with the Overland California Stage Company, in the early '60's. After the overland stages disappeared he was one of the early general passenger and ticket agents of the Denver, South Park & Pacific railway, in which position he remained until he retired and accepted a similar place with the Denver & Rio Grande Railroad Company, which he held for several years, until he was advanced to the more important and responsible position of traffic manager, which place he still occupies. Truthfully it can be said of Mr. Hughes that he is one of the old settlers of Denver. He first rode in on the stagecoach and saw the place when it was a settlement of a few score of rude buildings, and has since watched its building up until it has become one of the grandest and most imposing inland cities between the Atlantic and Pacific.

W. W. **Letson**, one of the early messengers, was born in South Carolina, April 2, 1836, where he lived until he reached his majority, when he went to Montgomery, Ala., and lived for some time. He then came North and, at the close of the Missouri-Kansas border strife, drifted into Kansas, in 1859. During the latter part of December, 1859, he was employed by the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company as messenger, and ran for some months between the Missouri river and Denver, some of the time from St. Joseph and later from Atchison, continuing for a short time after the stage line passed into the control of Ben. Holladay, in the early '60's.

Resigning his position as messenger in the fall of 1861, he was married at Granada, a station that had become prominent on the old pony express route, on Christmas, 1861, afterwards settling on the South Platte, at old Julesburg, where he bought out the mercantile firm of Thompson & Chrisman, remaining there only a few months, however, when he disposed of his stock of goods and returned to the States. He located in Nemaha county, Kan., at Granada, where, for more than five years the overland stages daily passed his place, and where he embarked in merchandising, later branching out into farming and stock-raising.

While in the service of the stage and express company, Mr. Letson, like most of the other messenger boys on the line, had a number of exciting experiences with buffaloes and Indians. He was also lost on the plains in blizzards, and one dark night, while coming down the Platte, the stage, with driver and every passenger on board, was lost for several hours. The driver, fatigued from overwork, had fallen asleep and the team had wandered from the road, and the vehicle had got turned around and was actually going in the opposite direction, towards Denver. The driver at first would not be convinced that the team was headed in the wrong direction until his attention was called to the fact that the Platte river, instead of being on the left of the stage-coach, as it had been for several hundred miles, was now plainly to be seen on the right side. When this was shown him there was no longer on his part a chance for prolonging the argument.

W. W. LETSON.

During the early part of the civil war, while he was coming from Denver on one of his trips in charge of a valuable treasure, he was cautioned by the agent of the stage company at Fort Kearney to be on the alert—that it was feared that a squad of rebels, under the leadership of Col. M. Jeff. Thompson, of St. Joseph, would intercept them and likely plunder the express and passengers at some lonely spot on the Kickapoo Indian reservation not far west of Atchison. When the east-bound stage reached the Big Blue river and the stream was crossed, at Marysville, it was a day of intense anxiety for him, as well as by all the passengers on the coach, for in their possession were several thousand dollars in gold. Luckily for all on the old Concord coach, there was no raid made, and the messenger as well as all the passengers breathed considerably easier when they got in sight of their destination on the Missouri river, and shortly afterward the vehicle drew up in front of the stage company's headquarters.

Mr. Letson, in the overland days, was known as "Bill" Letson, for short. He spent over ten years of his pioneer life in Kansas at Granada, where he built up a lucrative business among the ranchmen and plainsmen, for a number of years enjoying quite an extensive trade from the Kickapoo and Pottawatomie Indians. When the Rock Island road crossed the Missouri river and invaded Kansas, in the later '80's, he located on the new road at the now brisk town of Horton, where he has from the first been recognized as one of its leading citizens. In 1897 he was honored by his fellow townsmen by being chosen mayor of the city of Horton, a position he filled with honor to himself and satisfaction to his constituents. He is a well-preserved man and substantially fixed financially, being one of the largest real-estate owners in his town. A corner of one of his farms, a short distance west of Kennekuk, and in plain sight of his home, is crossed by the old stage road over which, forty years ago, the coaches started out from Atchison, and arrived there daily from California. He is a pleasant conversationalist, and greatly enjoys talking with old friends concerning the pioneer staging days. The writer, who was acquainted with him nearly forty years ago on the "Overland," recently met him for the first time in nearly thirty years, and for two or three hours the two greatly enjoyed themselves talking over old friendship and scenes and events in the almost-forgotten days before railroads were built west of the Missouri river.

In addition to being a leading farmer, Mr. Letson is also interested in the banking business in Oklahoma. He is vice-president of the Bank of Enid, Okla., his son-in-law, Mr. O. J. Fleming, being its president. His son, Frank H. Letson, is cashier. He has three sons, one daughter, and two grandchildren. He has lost one child, and his wife, an affectionate companion and a most estimable lady, died at Horton, Kan., November 6, 1899.

One of the faithful messengers in early staging days was **Chester Thomas, jr.**, who went into the employ of the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company. He came west from Towanda, Pa., to Kansas in 1857, locating at Auburn, Shawnee county. I first met him and made his acquaintance when we were making our second trips to Kansas, and were together for nine days on a trip up the Missouri river on the steamboat *Omaha* from St. Louis to Kansas City, in the fall of 1858. He was known as "Chet" Thomas, jr., his father being called "Uncle Chester." Before coming to Kansas, Chet had been on a surveying expedition in the valley of the Red River of the North, where he spent some months, suffering many hardships. While employed as messenger, in 1860–'61, his run first was from St. Joseph to Denver; afterwards from Atchison west. After retiring from the stage and express line he located in Topeka, in the early '60's, where he was shortly elected sheriff of Shawnee county, and reelected; afterwards, for two terms, he held the office of county treasurer, in both positions being an honest, capable and obliging officer. No man in the city of Topeka was ever more popular or had more ardent friends than Chet Thomas, jr., where he lived the greater part of his life, having secured a choice homestead and amassed a valuable estate. He was born in Troy, Bradford county, Pennsylvania, April 10, 1837, and died at his suburban home in Oakland, adjoining Topeka, August 15, 1888, at the age of 51 years. His funeral was one of the largest ever held in the capital city of Kansas.

John T. Gilmer, the senior member of the firm of Gilmer & Salisbury, was known as Jack Gilmer. He was a live and pushing fellow, driving on the Platte for Ben. Holladay when I knew him, in the early '60's, when he was staging. Previously he had been employed for some time on the plains "whacking" mules and oxen for the noted firm of Russell, Majors & Waddell. In 1864 he was made an agent on the Bitter Creek division. As a stage man he was one of the best, and, in the prosperous days of staging in the Northwest, he amassed a fortune. When the overland line passed from the ownership of Holladay, Wells, Fargo & Co. operated it until the railroad was finished. The completion of the Union Pacific and the development of the mining region in the Northwest necessitated the building of new stage lines in Montana and Idaho. The country was rapidly settling up and new mining camps and towns were being started. With $70,000 worth of the finest stage-coaches made, Gilmer & Salisbury were promptly at the front, and did an immense business and made large sums of money. After his several years' staging in the Northwest—railroads having built in and usurped his business there—Gilmer engaged in mining in the Black Hills in the later '70's, and, later, followed mining for some time in Nevada, Arizona, and California. While he amassed a fortune in staging, he probably lost in mining, for in 1884 he was again in the stage business, being associated with lines in Utah, Nevada, and on the Pacific slope. He died at Salt Lake in the later '90's, where his widow now resides.

Alex. Benham was a favorite with everybody on the great stage line. He was an experienced and capable man, and for a long time a well-known division agent on the important branch line between old Julesburg and Denver, in the early '60's. He also ran awhile as messenger. For several years in the pony-express days he was in some capacity associated with the company, and was always faithful to the trusts reposed in him.

George K. Otis, of New York city, a very capable and experienced business man, was for nearly three years in the service of the stage line. He was in Holladay's employ from October, 1861, to September, 1864, as financial agent, auditor, purchaser of supplies, general superintendent, etc. Otis was succeeded by William Reynolds, an experienced and capable stage man.

George M. Lloyd* was an honored and trusted employee of the overland mail line during nearly the whole of Ben. Holladay's connection with it. He first was assistant agent at Atchison, Kan., and afterwards agent at Fort Kearney, the junction of the three lines, from Atchison, Omaha, and Nebraska City.

John N. Todd,* a very capable and experienced man, was agent for the Holladay Overland Mail and Express Company at Boise City, Idaho. This position, in the palmy days of the Owyhee and Idaho City mines, was regarded one of the most important offices on the stage line.

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*See portrait, on page 75.

Maj. Oliver P. Wiggins, a Canadian by birth, and formerly a servant of the Hudson Bay Company, was a pioneer on the Western frontier. He was in what is now Colorado as early as 1834. For some time in the early days he was engaged with the American Fur Company, being stationed at Fort St. John. He was with Fremont during one of the Pathfinder's explorations across the continent in the early '40's, with the noted guide, Kit Carson. In the '60's, he was well known on the overland stage line, for some time being in charge of the eating station at Fort Kearney, one of the best on the line. During the Indian raids along the Platte in the later '60's, a large amount of property belonging to Major Wiggins was destroyed. Before the stage line had been superseded by the railroad, he had settled in Colorado, and became a wealthy citizen, but he afterwards met with financial reverses and lost everything. During the past few years he has been one of the faithful watchmen in the Government building at Denver.

Hugo Richards* was for some time connected with the stage line, being one of Holladay's faithful employees in charge of the office at Atchison in later years, where he remained until the latter part of 1866, the date of abandonment of the division extending from Atchison to Fort Kearney.

Thomas P. Beach and his brother, **A. T. Beach**, were among the trusted and efficient employees on the stage line. They succeeded David Street, the vast amount of business on the line in the later years of overland staging requiring two paymasters. Mr. Street then acted as auditor and supervised the paying.

In connection with the building of telegraph lines west of the Mississippi and Missouri rivers, the pioneer and frontiersman, **Henry M. Porter**, of Denver, deserves something more than a passing notice. He was born at Lancaster, Pa., November 2, 1840. His parents moved to Jefferson City, Mo., in the same year, when the country was filled with savages. From there the family moved, in 1854, onto a farm in Adair county, where he remained four years, when he began telegraph building.

Not long after the establishment of the original Overland Mail

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*See portrait, on page 75.

Company's route from St. Louis through northern Texas, New Mexico and Arizona to San Francisco, he built the first telegraph line from St. Louis to Fort Smith, Ark., in 1858–'59; also the line up the Missouri river, *via* Kansas City, Leavenworth, and Atchison, to Nebraska City and Omaha. Next, he began the construction of the line up the Platte west to Fort Kearney and on to old Julesburg, in 1860–'61. A considerable portion of this route was the trail taken by the Mormons in the later '40's and the pony express in the early '60's, and, as work progressed on the line, the pony ride was frequently shortened from twenty to forty miles. The second division of the great transcontinental enterterprise was built by Edward Creighton, one of the pioneers in telegraphy on the frontier, who completed the line to Salt Lake. The third division—from Salt Lake to California—was built by James Street.

Mr. Porter experienced a rough time in the construction of the line from Sedalia, Mo., to Kansas City. Numerous obstacles from time to time came up which impeded the work, some of them attended with great danger. It was before the civil war, during the period of the historic border strife, while the Missouri "bushwhackers" and the Kansas "jayhawkers," bitter political enemies, were the thickest in that region. Afterwards, during the ravages of the civil war, it was with difficulty that the line was kept open. Frequently it was cut down and had to be rebuilt. In the spring of 1862 he was engaged on an important Government line from Pilot Knob to Cape Girardeau and New Madrid, Mo., at the time General Pope was closely pressing General Pillow, resulting in the evacuation of Island No. 10.

In the fall of 1862 Mr. Porter located in Denver, and there engaged extensively in the grocery business, Stebbins & Porter being the name of the well-known firm. During the overland freighting period he was several years engaged in banking at Atchison. For almost four decades he has been a wide-awake, public-spirited, honored, upright, useful citizen of the Colorado capital. He located there when it contained less than 2000 people, freighting for years—before the advent of railroads on the plains—all his goods across the country by ox train, being five weeks on the road from the Missouri river. Frequently, when business was urgent, he made trips between Denver and Atchison on the overland California stage. In those days Denver was a town composed largely of tents, log houses, adobe and rough-board shanties. As one of the early settlers he has seen the squalid little place, started by a party of prospectors on the banks of Cherry Creek in 1858–'59, become a great metropolis. Steadily he has watched its unparalleled growth, until it is now an important railroad point, a great educational and political center, one of the wealthiest and (of its size) one of the most imposing and magnificently built cities in existence.

Early in December, 1858, little more than four years before I first crossed the plains, I met COL. FRED. W. LANDER and his party at the only hotel in Highland, Doniphan county, Kansas. He was just returning to Washington from a long overland exploring trip to Oregon, having been sent by the war department, during the administration of James Buchanan, to lay out a military wagon road to the Pacific.

The expedition in charge of Colonel Lander left Independence, Mo., May 1, 1858, and went to the South Pass *via* the old emigrant road and mail route laid out a decade before. The work of building the new road commenced at the pass, going *via* Soda Springs and Honey Lake to Oregon and California, for the construction of which the sum of $300,000 had, in 1857, been appropriated by Congress.

There were several men with Colonel Lander, who was splendidly equipped for such an undertaking. In his outfit were eight six-mule Government wagons and a small detachment of soldiers. The day, I well remember, was cold, very disagreeable for traveling, owing to a drizzling rain, and the distinguished party seemed glad, after being so long on the frontier, to stop a day at a Kansas hotel and rest themselves as well as their tired teams.

In stature Colonel Lander was rather tall, somewhat spare, but a noble-looking man. He had piercing dark eyes, and his long, dark hair rolled under around the back of his neck, just above his shoulders. His face was covered with a full brown beard and mustache. He was considerable of an explorer, having conducted three important expeditions across the continent, making two surveys to determine the practicability of a railroad route to the Pacific. The great overland wagon route to Oregon was surveyed and constructed by him. While engaged in this work his party of seventy-five men had a fight with the Piute Indians, and won a decisive victory. In all he made five transcontinental explorations, as engineer, chief engineer, or superintendent.

While Colonel Lander and his party were at the hotel there were quite a number of Highland's prominent citizens present, including Col. Thomas P. Herrick, editor of the *Highlander*, the first number of whose paper did not appear until two or three weeks after this visit. Nearly all those at the hotel were engaged in pleasant conversation, when the talk naturally drifted into politics. Colonel Lander was from New England, having been born in Salem, Mass., December 17, 1822. Colonel Herrick, several years younger, was a graduate from Amherst College, in the same state, and the two men greatly enjoyed themselves together, talking on matters connected with "way down East."

At that time the name of Kansas was in the minds of every one. Colonel Herrick, an earnest free-state Kansan, was anxious to know of the great explorer how, as an employee of the Government, he stood, on the then all-important question of the day. The explorer smiled good-naturedly, but promptly replied, saying, "Well, I suppose I ought to be a good administration man; but," he continued, "I am not." Colonel Lander, who later distinguished himself in the civil war and was made a brigadier general and placed at the head of an army, fell in an engagement at Paw Paw, Va., March 2, 1862.

JAMES H. BRIDGER. An important stage station in the Rockies was Fort Bridger, the third military post established on the great overland route. It consisted of two log houses with dirt roofs, and was located 478 miles northwest of Denver and 124 miles northeast of Salt Lake, its altitude being about 7000 feet. It was nestled in the mountains, in the center of green pastures, and was well watered. Black's Fork, a large, clear, running stream, a prominent tributary of Green river, flows near it. It was an important station. Here was the home of James H. Bridger (Jim Bridger for short, also known as Colonel Bridger,) after whom Bridger's Pass was named many years ago. He was the discoverer of this pass into the Salt Lake valley, and is believed to have been the first white man to sail on Great Salt Lake, in 1824–'25. He was a member of General Ashley's expedition in 1826, and it was probably in the '30's that he located permanently at this place.

Bridger was a renowned hunter, trapper, guide, and scout. At his ranch he had a large store, in the '50's, stocked with dry-goods, groceries, liquor, tobacco, ammunition, etc. He had a space of perhaps two acres surrounded by a stockade—timbers set in the ground elevated eight or ten feet above the surface. Inside this stockade was his residence on one side and his trading post diagonally across from it in one corner. Large swinging gates were in the center of the front, through which teams and cattle could be driven, safe from Indians and renegade white thieves. He kept house with no less than two squaws and had about him quite a number of half-breed papooses. He owned a large number of cattle, horses, and mules, and his place was so situated that he enjoyed a large trade with the Mormons, gold hunters, pilgrims, mountaineers, and Indians. As early as 1847, before the advance-guard of the "saints" arrived there, Bridger claimed to have made fifty trips from his place to Salt Lake, but did not then know the exact distance.

JAMES H. BRIDGER.

In their pilgrimage to the "land of Zion," the Mormons camped a few days at Bridger's, in July, 1847, for rest. Here they shod their stock, made repairs on the wagons, and did other necessary work, before proceeding on their journey into the Great Salt Lake valley, their destination and future home. They afterwards built a stone fort at Bridger's. In 1858, after the place fell into the hands of "Uncle Sam," a strong frontier military post was established, and the name Fort Bridger retained, as a compliment to the noted early pioneer. It was here that Col. A. S. Johnston—who employed Bridger as guide—wintered his little army, in 1857–'58, *en route* to Salt Lake City.*

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* Describing the march of Government troops from Fort Leavenwarth to Salt Lake City, in the autumn of 1857 and winter of 1857–'58, to suppress the "Mormon rebellion," Gen. F. V. Greene, in his history of the United States Army, says "Fort Bridger is about 1100 miles west of Fort Leavenworth, at an altitude of near 7000 feet above the sea, on the

Jim Bridger was long a conspicuous figure in the West, having taken up his residence in Utah some time in the early '20's. He made his home nearly all his life in the Rockies. He was in every sense a pioneer and trapper, and, as early as 1824, was known quite well on the upper Missouri and Mississippi, having carried a load of furs to St Louis that year *via* the Missouri river. Later, in the '50's and '60's, he was a faithful, trusted guide in the employ of the Government. For a time in the spring of 1865, during the closing year of the civil war, he was employed as guide and scout for Col. Preston B. Plumb, of the Eleventh Kansas Volunteers, while this gallant officer, at the head of his regiment, was doing duty against the Indians along the stage route in that part of the West.

In January, 1866, I met the jolly old frontiersman at Atchison, just as he had come down by the overland stage-coach from his home in the mountains, on his way to Westport, Mo., to visit the scenes of his boyhood days. He was then in the employ of Government as guide and interpreter. In 1865 he was on General Connor's staff. He was a native of Virginia, but settled in western Missouri when very young. During his long pioneer life in the mountains he had become a shrewd trader, a good judge of stock, and few, apparently, could get the better of him in a horse or mule trade. In the later years of his life he was rather uncouth in dress, not very polite in manners, extremely

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western side of the Rocky Mountains. In this remote spot Col. A. S. Johnston's little army passed the winter in tents," not in Fort Bridger, but on Black's Fork, about three miles south, where they herded their animals in the valley. "In the fort and vicinity were entrenched about 2700 armed Mormons, but there were no hostilities, although the Mormons frequently tried to steal the cattle or stampede the herds." The thermometer sometimes registered thirty degrees below zero, and frequently ten below. "Sage-brush for fuel had to be hauled five miles through deep snow." From the 1st of November to the 19th, when they went into winter quarters, according to Lieutenant Colonel Cooke, who commanded the Second Dragoons, the little army suffered awful hardships, marching through deep snow and camping nights in tents. On November 11 the guides reported "no grass to be found" and they had "only one day's corn after that night." That night was "intensely cold," and Colonel Cooke says "the mules were ordered to be tied to the wagons. They gnawed and destroyed four wagon tongues, a number of wagon covers, ate their ropes, and, getting loose, ate the sage fuel collected at the tents; some tents were also attacked." Nine mules died that night. On November 19 he reports: "I have 144 horses and have lost 134. It has been of starvation." How they managed to live through that terrible winter, sheltered only by tents and wagons, is told by Colonel Brackett in his "History of the United States Cavalry." Early in the following June the Mormons evacuated the fort, retreated towards Salt Lake City, and Johnston and his army followed them, entering the city without opposition on June 10, 1858. From that date Fort Bridger, originally a Mormon outpost, became an important United States military post, and still retains its place on the map, in the southwest corner of Wyoming, though of little consequence now. The Colonel Johnston of this expedition is none other than Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston, who achieved military fame during the civil war of 1861-'65.

fond of tobacco, and would occasionally take a drink "for his stomach's sake." He was a good talker, with a wonderful memory, could tell lots of interesting stories, and those intimately acquainted with him said it was a pleasure to sit and converse with him about early days on the plains and life in the Rocky Mountains. In all respects Jim Bridger was a far-westerner, and, up to the '60's, when the overland stages were running, his visits to the States had been few and far between.

JACK SLADE. No one knows how many men Slade had killed. but he had a large number of victims placed to his credit when I first went on the "Overland," in the early part of 1863. Nearly all of the boys employed on the stage line feared him. Few cared to get his ill will. I never heard much about the fellow until I made my first trip across the plains by the old Concord stage. When I got in sight of old Julesburg and commenced to talk about the place, then it was that I began to hear so much about Slade and the difficulty that arose between him and the Frenchman, "Old Jules," who was superseded by Slade, who afterward brutally murdered him. Jules had left the overland line the year before I engaged with the company and had taken up his abode in Montana, in the heart of the new gold region, which offered a better field for future operations.

Slade had killed a man in Illinois when he was a young man and fled West to the Missouri valley. At St. Joseph he joined a California-bound wagon-train, and was given the position of train-master. While out on the plains he became involved in a quarrel with one of the wagon drivers and, at the same instant, both drew their revolvers. The driver, however, had his weapon cocked first, and Slade cunningly intimated that it was not worth while to waste ammunition and life on so small a matter. As a compromise, he proposed that their guns be dropped to the ground and the difficulty settled by their fists. This was perfectly satistory to the unsuspecting driver, who instantly threw down his weapon. Slade then had the drop on him; he held fast to his gun and, laughing in the face of his innocent enemy, then shot him dead in his tracks.

Slade, soon after the cowardly murder, made his escape. He divided his time between making "good Indians" and steering clear of an Illinois sheriff, armed with a warrant for his arrest for his first murder. As an Indian fighter, it is said, he was very successful, having, one time, single-handed, killed three or four savages; then capped the climax by cutting off their ears and sending them to the chief of the tribe.

It was only a short time afterwards until Slade had won the confidence of the managers of the stage line by his mode of Indian fighting. They thought he was just the man needed at that time. He was employed, and given a responsible position as division agent on the great stage line, with headquarters at Julesburg, the place occupied by Jules, whose services were dispensed with. For some time before the change horses belonging to the company would mysteriously disappear, coaches would be delayed, and other things frequently occur which showed there were gangs of outlaws near by. It was difficult to tell how to remedy the matter. The thieves simply laughed at the idea of any one resenting the outrages. Slade, the new division agent, was determined on a change. By this time the outlaws had learned that he feared nothing. Wherever there was trouble on that division the life of the offenders was short. He made friends by killing a half-dozen of the worst characters. After he had done this the company' property was unmolested and the coaches began to run with more regularity. While there were occasional delays on the line, the stages on Slade's division went through safely and without delay.

Jules had nothing particularly against Slade, but he hated him simply because Slade had supplanted him on the stage line. To make matters worse, Slade employed a bitter enemy—a man whom Jules had once discharged. A stage team was recovered by Slade, who accused Jules of driving off and hiding the animals for his own use. Slade had found Jules to be a thief and robber, and from that time on it was war between the two men. Not long afterwards, as Slade opened the door and entered a store, he was greeted with the contents of a double-barreled shot-gun from Jules, who stood secreted behind the door. Almost instantly Slade pulled his revolver and emptied two chambers of the weapon, and the two fell, bleeding, and were carried away to their respective lodging quarters. Both men lay on their beds a long time; but Jules, being the first able to get out, packed his things on the backs of two mules and pushed west to the Rockies, where he could recuperate, and once more return and meet his deadly enemy. It was a long time before he was heard from and he was about forgotten by every one except Slade. It was said *he* never could forget him, and, according to report, kept a standing reward for his body, dead or alive.

Order having been restored by Slade around old Julesburg, on one of the worst divisions on the line, he was transferred to the Rocky Ridge division, northwest of Julesburg, and entrusted with the task of bringing "order out of chaos" there. This division was now fast gaining the reputation of being one of the worst sections of the stage line. It had become infested by a gang of outlaws and desperadoes who recognized no authority except violence. Murders were of frequent occurrence, in broad daylight, being committed on the slightest misunderstanding. The revolver and bowie-knife were the principal weapons used in settling a dispute. In a country where there was no law in those days, it was supposed the parties killing one another had their private reasons; hence no one mixed up in such matters. When a murder had taken place all would officiate at the burial, the murderer himself being prominent, and assisting in performing the last sad rites.

In taking up his abode where the country was so full of horse-thieves and desperate characters, Slade came to the conclusion that the only thing to do under the circumstances was to shoot all such offenders as fast as they became known. He immediately began a forward movement on their works, and, one by one, he picked out and killed the leaders of the notorious gang. In a remarkably short space of time all depredations on the stage line ceased, a considerable of the stolen stock was recovered, and several of the worst outlaws in the district were shot. Something of this kind had to be done before the authorities could operate the line with anything like satisfactory results. His work of cleaning out the cutthroats and leaders of the desperadoes was commended by the stage-line management. Most of those who had been under the control of the highwaymen now began to respect him and lend him their assistance in future operations. All agreed that he had done a good job, and it was but a short time until it was as quiet on the Rocky Ridge division as he had fixed things during his employment at old Julesburg. Two horse-thieves who had stolen overland-stage stock were captured by him and he hung both to the limb of a tree. While the troubles made by the thieves and cutthroats lasted he was the high court of the district—he was Judge Lynch all by himself. It is related that, one time while a party of emigrants were going overland, some of their stock had suddenly disappeared. Slade having been apprised of all the facts, he, with another man, made his way to a ranch where he was satisfied, from the character borne by the occupants, that the stock had been taken and secreted, and, opening the door, commenced blazing away at the promiscuous crowd inside, three of whom he killed, while the fourth was badly wounded.

As a marksman with a Colt's navy revolver no one on the plains could surpass Slade, and few could equal him. At Rocky Ridge, one morning, he observed a man coming up who, some days bebefore, had offended him. "Gentlemen," said the matchless marksman, drawing his gun, "it is a good twenty-yard shot; I 'll clip the third button on his coat!" which he did instantly. It pleased some of the bystanders. A funeral soon followed, and all the witnesses, with the murderer, attended it.

A fellow who dealt out "chain lightning" in a liquid state at the station in some way had angered Slade—and his first duty to himself was to make his will. Not long afterward Slade called at his place and asked for some brandy. Taking the decanter from the shelf and turning around he found himself gazing into the muzzle of a six-shooter; and, in another instant, he was lying on the floor a dead man.

A party of men one time captured Slade, whom they determined to lynch. After disarming him they locked him up in a log house, surrounding which they placed a guard. He begged them to send for his wife, whom he wanted to see and talk with before dying. She was promptly notified and, mounting a fast horse, rode to her imprisoned companion. The guards thoughtlessly let her in without searching her and, before the door had been closed she whipped out a brace of revolvers, and forthwith the couple marched out defying the crowd. While the excitement continued they mounted double, and, under a fierce fire, made their escape unharmed.

Of his trip across on the overland stage, in the early '60's, Mark Twain, in "Roughing It," says:

"In due time we rattled up to a stage station, and sat down to breakfast with a half-savage, half-civilized company of armed and bearded mountaineers, ranchmen, and station employees. The most gentlemanly appearing, quiet and affable officer we had yet found along the road in the Overland company's service was the person who sat at the head of the table, at my elbow. Never youth stared and shivered as I did when I heard them call him *Slade!*

"Here was romance, and I sitting face to face with it!—looking upon it, touching it, hobnobbing with it, as it were! Here, right by my side, was the actual ogre who, in fights and brawls and various ways, had taken the lives of twenty-six human beings, or all men lied about him! I suppose I was the proudest stripling that ever traveled to see strange lands and wonderful people.

"He was so friendly and so gentle-spoken that I warmed to him in spite of his awful history. It was hardly possible to realize that this pleasant person was the pitiless scourge of the outlaws, the raw-head-and-bloody-bones the nursing mothers of the mountains terrified their children with. And to this day I can remember nothing remarkable about Slade, except that his face was rather broad across the cheek-bones, and that the cheek-bones were low and the lips peculiarly thin and straight; but that was enough to leave something of an effect upon me, without fancying that the owner of it is a dangerous man.

"The coffee ran out; at least it was reduced to one tin cupful, and Slade was about to take it, when he saw that my cup was empty. He politely offered to fill it, but, although I wanted it, I politely declined. I was afraid he had not killed anybody that morning and might be needing diversion. But still with firm politeness he insisted on filling my cup, and said I had traveled all night and better deserved it than he; and while he talked he placidly poured the fluid, to the last drop. I thanked him and drank it, but it gave me no comfort, for I could not feel sure that he would not be sorry, presently, that he had given it away, and proceed to kill me to distract his thoughts from the loss. But nothing of the kind occurred. We left him with only twenty-six dead people to account for, and I felt a tranquil satisfaction in the thought that, in so judiciously taking care of No. 1 at that breakfast table, I had pleasantly escaped being No. 27. Slade came out to the coach and saw us off, first ordering certain rearrangements of the mail-bags for our comfort, and then we took leave of him, satisfied that we should hear of him again some day, and wondering in what connection."

Slade frequently rode from his ranch into Virginia City, filled up on the vilest of liquor, and then, in his peculiar way, would begin to "paint the town red." While riding along the streets and shooting off his revolvers promiscuously right and left, and terrorizing all law-abiding citizens, he appeared to be in the height of his glory and apparently master of the situation. One of his favorite pastimes, and in which he seemed to take great delight, was riding his horse roughshod into the saloons and gambling-houses and proclaiming, in unmistakable language, that he was the veritable "bad man from Bitter creek."

CHAPTER XXI.

MORE ABOUT THE "OVERLAND."

NOW that more than forty years have gone by since the southern or Butterfield line was equipped and in operation, it will not be out of place to state that a goodly portion of that route on which the Overland Mail Company ran its stages in the later '50's was almost impracticable for staging. But for the mild winter climate it would have been entirely so. The long stretches of deserts; the scarcity of water; the difficulties in obtaining feed for stock, and the almost impassable condition of portions of the road, were the main difficulties. Passengers traveling it became almost crazed by the long and tedious twenty-three days' journey day and night, practically much of the way without any rest and comparatively little break in its monotony.

The rebellion having been declared early in the spring of 1861, as soon as could be the southern road was abandoned. The company moved its stock and coaches up north onto the central route, going from St. Joseph and Atchison, *via* the Little Blue and Platte rivers and South Pass, to Salt Lake City, and thence *via* Virginia City, Nev., to Sacramento, Cal. Notwithstanding the Butterfield company had a six years' contract, from September, 1858, for transporting the letter mails on the southern route, the war naturally brought this to a sudden termination. The move from the southern to the northern or central route was ordered by Government shortly after the firing of the first gun in the civil war.

In the latter part of 1858 there was a stage line in operation known as the "Central Overland California." Its initial point was St. Joseph, on the Missouri river. About the same time another line was organized, and in May, 1859, ran between Leavenworth and Denver, under the name of the Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express. The proprietors were Jones & Russell. The backers and chief owners of these two lines were the well-known Government freight contractors, Russell, Majors & Waddell. Soon afterward the two lines were consolidated, under the name of the

Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express Company. The firm of Russell, Majors & Waddell became subcontractors on the contract for that portion of the line from St. Joseph, Mo., to Salt Lake City. The remnant of the Southern Overland Mail Company's stock and coaches having been put on the route between Salt Lake and Virginia City, Nev., that part of the line was known as the "Overland Mail Company." The gap on the west end between Virginia City and Sacramento was filled in by the "Pioneer Stage Line," of California, owned by Louis and Charles McLane. The McLanes were well-known stage men, and Louis was afterwards president of Wells, Fargo & Co. when they became successors of the Holladay Overland Mail and Express Company, in the later '60's.

At the expiration of the contract with Russell, Majors & Waddell, Ben. Holladay was the successful bidder on the through contract for transporting the United States letter mails from St. Joseph, Mo., to the Pacific; and the Overland Mail Company and the Pioneer Stage Line were the subcontractors for that portion of the route covered by their lines; and thus the long stage line was operated until it was closed out by the Union and Central Pacific railroads.

The contract for carrying the mail was from St. Joseph, that being the western terminus of the first railroad through Missouri; but, upon completion of the Missouri Valley railroad between St. Joseph and Atchison, in January, 1860, the latter was made the point of departure. The company received the mails from the Hannibal & St. Joseph Railroad Company at St. Joseph and transported them twenty miles by rail to Atchison, where it moved the headquarters of the stage line in the spring of 1860.

The line from St. Joseph, Mo., (or Atchison, Kan.,) to Sacramento, Cal., was operated as one line, through tickets being sold between the points named. The company had it well equipped throughout. The Pioneer was also a great stage line—the pride of California. It sprang into existence in the palmy days of Virginia City and the noted Comstock silver-mines, and its equipment was superb—new and first-class Concord stages, Hill's unsurpassed Concord harness; the finest six-horse teams, and drivers who were paid as high as $125 and $150 per month, and who were as fine reinsmen as ever drew lines over a horse. While on duty, they never got off the box until they had completed their drive of from three to five stations. The changes of teams were made by the stock tenders and the reins handed up to the driver, who, on arriving at the station had thrown down the lines to the men standing ready with the fresh team. The old team would move out and the new one take its place, every horse apparently knowing and stepping right to his place. In an incredibly short time the reins would be passed up to the driver on the box, and, with a crack of his whip, the team would suddenly start, the stage rolling out with its heavy load of passengers, a large number of express packages, and the great through letter mail between the Atlantic and Pacific.

The road built across the Sierra Nevada range was a marvel—said to have been one of the best highways ever made. In most places it was as smooth as an asphalt pavement. No unpaved mountain road was ever made better. It was graded almost as wide as a street clear across the summit and sprinkled and rolled every day, tanks being located at convenient points for furnishing water for sprinkling. It was necessary to do this work, else the road would soon become so dusty no one could stand it.

Upon the discovery of gold in Montana a great rush to those mines was the result. The travel was immense. To accommodate the crowd, Ben. Holladay put on a daily stage line from Salt Lake City to Bannock, Virginia City, and Helena, Mont., *via* Fort Hall, on Snake river. He carried the mails under a contract covering that route. Later on, after the discovery of gold in the Owyhee, Idaho City and Boise mines, in Idaho, new and important mail routes were opened, and Holladay obtained a contract for carrying the United States mails from Salt Lake City to The Dalles, in Oregon, *via* Fort Hall and Boise City. He stocked and ran the line to Boise City, and sublet it from there to Dalles City, Ore., *via* Walla Walla. There being rival stage lines and routes across the Blue Mountains, Mr. Holladay found it advantageous, and so sublet that portion of the contract.

On the eastern or Missouri river end of the overland route the lateral lines, or feeders, were the two important branches from Omaha and Nebraska City, intersecting at Fort Kearney, where they formed a junction with the main line from Atchison. Both of these branches were operated daily and grew to be quite important lines. Later there was the Smoky Hill route from Atchison to Denver—the line that had been stocked by Dave

Butterfield, who was backed by Boston and New York capitalists, and later on sold to Ben. Holladay and incorporated into the Holladay Overland Mail and Express Company.

At Denver, the tributaries of the "Overland" were a daily line—often semidaily—between Denver and Central City, the central point of the noted Gregory or Gilpin county gold-mines; and a triweekly or daily line from Denver *via* Breckinridge to California Gulch, adjoining the present Leadville. In the various routes operated by Holladay there were about 3700 miles of daily stage lines. In all, he controlled nearly 5000 miles of daily overland mail contracts—by far the largest number of miles in postal matters operated by any firm in the country.

To manage all these lines was a big undertaking. It required, on a rough estimate, about 500 coaches and express wagons, fully as many freight wagons, and some 5000 horses, mules, and cattle, the latter being used for freighting supplies for the stage company. Everything in the way of grain, hay, provisions, etc., had to be hauled over the line in wagons. The stations in the later years averaged about ten miles apart. About every fifty miles there was a "home" station, so called because the driver's route ended there. It was also the eating place for the passengers. The intervening stations were called "swing" stations. They consisted of a stable, granary, and room for two or three stock tenders. The "home" stations were commodious buildings, arranged with sleeping-rooms, dining-room, office, telegraph office, barn, etc.

The line was divided into sections of about 200 miles each, three of these sections being called a division, with a practical stage man in charge as division agent. He was usually a man who had risen from the rank of driver. His position was an important one. He bought all the grain, hay and supplies for his division, hired the station-keepers, drivers, blacksmiths, harness-makers and stock tenders. Any matters on his division over which there was a dispute were adjusted by him. There were three divisions on the main California line. Each of these divisions was placed under a superintendent, and the whole line under a general superintendent or general manager. There was also on each division a local agent, who usually acted as clerk for the division agent in addition to his other duties.

At the starting and terminal points—particularly at all principal places—there were office agents, clerks, and bookkeepers. In addition to these officers was the paymaster and auditor, and agent or manager of the express department, and the nine express messengers, who often traveled in an express coach especially made at Concord for the purpose, which had an iron safe built inside it at the front end, just back of the driver's seat. Besides the stations, at the headquarters of every division were coach and repair shops, blacksmith and harness shops, etc., with a a horseshoer and harness repairer with separate team and outfit, whose duties were to travel from station to station on one continual round of horse-shoeing and repairing.

At Atchison, Denver, Salt Lake City and other important points shops on a large scale were established, where the general repairing was done with material from the manufactory at Concord—the same that had originally been used in building the coaches—so that, in case of emergency, a coach could be built entire, which was frequently done.

The whole stage route was operated with the precision and punctuality of a railroad line, and in all seasons, night and day, coaches ran with nearly the same regularity as railway-trains. A gentleman living in Denver in those days, whose place of business was near the stage office, used to say, jokingly, that he could set his watch by the arrival and departure of the "Overland."

Few persons unacquainted with the old "Overland" line can realize what a gigantic concern it was, and the vast amount of money required to equip and operate it. For hundreds of miles it was practically a barren waste, very little growing on it but sage-brush; the logs to build some of the stations had to be hauled by wagon from 150 to 200 miles; the nearest corn-fields on the east end were on the Blue river, in Kansas, and at Grand Island, in Nebraska, and Salt Lake valley, in the west; and the extra product of these few localities only furnished a partial supply. In a case of shortage or a total failure of crops, which occasionally happened, the supply of grain had to come by boat from St. Louis. David Street, while general manager of the stage line, in the later '60's, chartered seven Missouri river steamboats in one day at St. Louis to load with corn for the "Overland." The hay supply was of itself an important item, and was obtained in the country along the route; but in some localities it had to be hauled fifty miles or more.

An idea of the immensity of the enterprise and the great amount of business it made can be readily realized. In order to support it the receipts had to be large; and in the flush times they were enormous. In addition to the mail pay of $1,000,000 on the main line, the Montana, Idaho and Eastern branch line contracts amounted to about as much more. Receipts from passenger and express business were very large, often being from $150,000 to $200,000 per month. At one time fare from Atchison to Placerville was $600; to Helena, Mont., $525; extra baggage, 75 cents to $1.50 per pound. When the mining excitement ran highest, the coaches were carrying full loads both ways.

With all the money at the back of the great stage line, and the untiring push and energy of Ben. Holladay, it is believed he would not have made a success of the enterprise except for the efficiency and fidelity of the men he drew around him. His managers and superintendents, agents and messengers, with few exceptions, were capable, efficient, and honest. His drivers and stock tenders were the best. No storms nor dangers seemed to daunt them. It appeared marvelous at the time, and many who made the long ride across the continent have often wondered since what it was that inspired them. Their lives were frequently in peril. Apparently they knew no fear. Evidently there was some incentive that induced those men to face so many dangers.

After the pony express had been wiped out by the telegraph, the great attraction for all traversing the plains was the "Overland" stage-coach. There was nothing on the road that could equal it. Daily it was seen by hundreds, often thousands, of people. Almost every one seemed to be allured by it. Thousands of people making their way across by trains hauled by oxen, horses and mules would, for the time, stop a moment and gaze at the old vehicle as it rolled past them, seemingly moving along with almost the rapidity of a railway-train. While the outfits propelled by oxen would be from six to seven weeks on the road between the Missouri and the Rockies, the old Concord coach would, almost invariably, cover the distance easily in six days—often a few hours less.

In his nearly 2000-mile-ride to California on a special stage-coach from Atchison, in the '60s, Albert D. Richardson made the run to Denver in four and a half days. In passing over the desert road of 575 miles between Salt Lake and Virginia, Nev., the distance was covered in seventy-two hours, the average speed being a fraction less than eight miles an hour. The last seventy-two miles which took him into Placerville, at the foot of the Sierra Nevadas, was made in seven hours, including all stoppages. On one of the changes going down the mountains he was driven eight miles in thirty minutes. The ride was a highly exciting one, and in care of any other than a thoroughly experienced driver it would have been extremely perilous.

As has been mentioned, when Holladay sold out the great stage line, in the fall of 1866, it passed into the hands of one of the greatest express companies in the country—Wells, Fargo & Co. —who were then doing business all over the West. After getting possession of the Holladay overland mail and express line, Wells, Fargo & Co. made early arrangements for doing an increased business. They bought of the Abbot-Downing Company a large number of the finest Concord coaches, believing that a half-dozen years or more would elapse before the completion of the Union Pacific road. Like many others, they were mistaken in the time it was expected it would take in winding up the overland staging. Contrary to all expectations, the Pacific companies, with their thoroughly drilled army of railway builders constantly at work, kept steadily shortening the stage rides. The great transcontinental line was finished years sooner than it was believed possible that the vast work could be done. The result of its early completion was a surprise that astonished every one; and it was a severe financial blow to the purchasers of the Holladay line, and they lost heavily. They had on hand, when the two roads were united, between $50,000 and $75,000 worth of surplus stage-coaches, and these they closed out to Gilmer & Salisbury for less than one-third the original cost.

There was great excitement in the mountain camps tributary to Denver when the railroads were pushing out, and on the eve of side-tracking, for all time, the old Concord stages. When the South Park road had reached as far as Webster there was a scene that defies all description. For months while it lasted everything was lively, but it was the dying gasp of the famous stage-coach lines that ran out in that direction. Great throngs arrived on the trains from Denver, all bound for the one rich carbonate camp—Leadville. There was a lively jostling—a mighty rush for seats on the stage-coach. The excitement seemed to be up to fever heat. Nearly every one wanted first choice of seats and the wildest confusion ensued. Springing up almost like a mushroom, the stage company was illy prepared for such a busy throng. It was a trying matter to handle the immense travel. The stage line started by McClelland & Spotswood with a "jerky"—a two-seated, canvas-covered rig—grew into such gigantic proportions that it ended up with six six-horse coaches daily. Practically every suitable vehicle that ran on wheels that could be got hold of was for a time utilized in moving the passengers.

While the life of this stage route was only eighteen months, the traffic over it was simply enormous. In the equipment of the line the company kept 400 horses on the road. In the way of stations, one was put in every eleven miles, with accommodations at each for twenty-four to forty head of horses. It was not uncommon to handle 100 passengers a day. The rush was heavy all the time, but the highest number transported to the camp in a single day by the company was 165. The heaviest travel was in the winter of 1878, when the route lay over Weston Pass. In the fall of 1879 this company did its last staging, operating for a time a line of coaches from Colorado Springs and Cañon City which connected with the South Park road.

In buying their horses and mules the company went to St. Louis, that being one of the best markets in the country for stage stock. That business alone was a responsible and important position. No one but a careful, experienced stage man could do it. It required a good deal of tact and sound judgment to select such a large number of animals from the droves in the stock-yards, for use in staging. In picking out a bunch, care must be exercised in getting the required proportion of leaders and wheelers. It was important, also, to pick out good mates. But occasionally, in spite of his judgment, the most experienced horse buyer would miss it in choosing an animal that to him appeared perfectly sound and exactly what was required for the work to be done. A team that would be just the thing needed on the rolling prairies would not be what was wanted for work on the plains. A team that would do good work in the Platte valley sometimes would n't be worth a "tinker's malediction" in hauling a Concord stage on one of the mountain divisions.

Probably one of the best teams on the stage line did duty in the Little Blue valley, in southern Nebraska, and was known as "the Arkansaws." The horses were four big sorrels, perfect in every respect. Bird was the name of the off wheeler; the near one Dutch. Enoch Cummings says he often drove them ten miles, from Thirty-two-mile Creek to Lone Tree, in forty minutes, without the least inconvenience to them. A Californian making the trip by stage in the early '60's rode on the box alongside the driver, behind the favorite steeds, and formed a strong attachment for them. He was so delighted with the near leader, which was such a nice match for one he owned on the Pacific coast, that he offered $600 for the animal. But even this seemingly large amount was no inducement for the stage company to part with the horse. The company was not selling stage stock, but was constantly on the lookout for the best animals that could be found for such work.

Another good four-horse team driven by Cummings along the charming Little Blue was known as "the Red Rovers." This team hauled the old Concord coach for a long time between Virginia station and Rock Creek, nine miles. These animals were all "pony express" horses. The favorite one was a little black steed that ran out of St. Joseph with the first pouch of pony letters that crossed the Missouri river for San Francisco, on the 3d of April, 1861. All the old drivers thought everything of this team. It was nothing unusual for this favorite animal to cover twenty-five miles in two hours. He was the off leader, and his name was Hunter. The name of the near leader was Butch. The off wheel-horse was known as Rover; the near one, Gimlet.

Considering the great length of the overland stage route, with its numerous important branches—reaching out into almost every rich mining camp in the Northwest—it seems remarkable that there were so few "hold-ups" and robberies on the line. It appeared a more difficult job to rob a stage-coach full of passengers in the early '60's than it is to-day for two or three men to hold up a railway-train and go through the express-car and a coach filled with passengers. During the staging days nearly every man crossing the plains with money on his person was armed to the teeth, and a vigilant watch was constantly kept up for highwaymen and thieves and robbers, who undoubtedly realized it was a desperate undertaking to attempt to go through a stage load of fearless, determined passengers. Besides, the stage-coaches then seldom carried such vast sums of treasure as are now transported by the railroads; hence "hold-ups" were not near so frequent as they are at the present time.

About the middle of November, 1866, the great stage man made a trip to the Mormon capital, mention of which was made by the Salt Lake *Telegraph*, as follows:

> "Ben. Holladay, Esq., the president of the Holladay Overland Mail and Express Company, arrived in this city yesterday from the East. Mr. H. had eight days, between Denver and this place, of anything but pleasant weather—an experience for him which many of the employees of the line would be glad enough to see fall to his lot, so that the president and directors could fully realize the 'inhospitable life on the sage-brush.'"

When Holladay made his fast ride from Placerville east by his stage line it was a great undertaking. Before leaving the Pacific slope terminus, orders were given every station agent to have fresh teams in readiness at a moment's warning. Such orders carried out would throw out of gear and disarrange for days the schedule on an entire division, but these were the orders sent out by the respective division men and they must be implicitly obeyed. While at Big Bend, about fifty miles down the South Platte from Denver, Bob Spotswood, a division agent, was notified to report immediately at Denver.

"Lay your stock so as to be sure and catch him," was the order for his division, "and, to make sure of it, bring a fast team to Denver to see him out."

The "fast team" was none other than the "Benham" team of mules, known by reputation the entire length of the great stage line. They were well built and especially noted for their speed; great favorites with stage men, stockmen, in fact, every one who chanced to ride behind them. This particular team could be relied on to haul a stage over the road at the rate of a mile every four minutes. The superintendent west of Denver at the same time laid his stock to be certain to "catch" the speeding owner of the stage line, who was pushing rapidly east towards the Colorado metropolis. Spotswood reached Denver two hours ahead of the millionaire stage man. When the latter arrived he sent for him, and when he entered the prince of stage lines was fairly blustering.

"My son, have you got everything ready?" he asked, in his bluff way.

"Yes," was the prompt answer.

"You can get it out," said the chief, very anxious to be off.

In two minutes the team was out, but Holladay, it seems, was not ready to go, for he lingered an hour. When ready he stepped out of the office, his head covered with a fashionable sombrero, puffing at a cigar, and accompanied by Gen. P. E. Connor, so long in command at Camp Douglas, Utah, on his fast ride across the continent. The two men having taken their seats inside the Concord "special," the noted stage man said:

"Now, Robert, let us fly. I 'll give you an hour and a half to make the out-station."

Robert made it with his Benham mule team in an hour and a quarter. There was not a single break. The animals were the very best trotters on the line. The next team was a favorite one, known as the old "catfish" team of dapple-grays. They had a record of one hour between Denver and Golden, fifteen miles. The eleven-mile run, over which Holladay went flying, was covered in fifty-five minutes. The 200-mile ride over Spotswood's division, from Denver to old Julesburg, was made in twenty hours.

"My son, you 've done well. How many mules do you suppose I 've killed?" Holladay said gravely, as he parted from Spotswood.

There was no finer stage stock in the world than a goodly portion of that utilized on the various lines running out of Denver into the mountains. Billy Opdike drove a string of six bays in and out of the city for a long time. Perhaps the handsomest team was one of six snow-white horses which ran first on the Central City line, and afterwards on the Georgetown, and finally into Leadville, when stages carried the immense passenger traffic then pouring into the great carbonate camp. The team was widely known, especially the leaders, which every one knew as "Turk" and "Clothes-line."

When the South Park road got as far out as Morrison, a famous sorrel team was put on, the name of one of the leaders being Old Cap. He was a decided favorite with Billy McClelland, the noted messenger and afterwards stage proprietor, who drove him for a number of years after he quit staging. The old animal's last run was over the shell rock of Mosquito Pass. In his later years he was comparatively worthless, having contracted a bad and permanent case of corns.

Nearly every driver had a decided affection for the favorite horses they had so long driven. So strong was their love for them that it was often a matter of comment. Some were so devotedly attached to their teams that they attended them personally in the stable rather than trust a stock tender to do it. Each team went over one "drive"—from one station to the next—when the animals were taken out, put in the stable, and, inside of twenty-four hours, driven back, hitched on to the stage going in the opposite direction. Where the driver knew the team and they knew his touch, he regretted to part with them. Some of the wheelers working on the mountain lines were enormous fellows, and a six-horse team would be greatly admired, the animals being all of the same shade, and tapering off nicely from the wheelers down to the leaders.

There might possibly have been some stage stock scattered throughout the country in all respects equal to that in use on the overland route, but certainly there was none any better. It was the almost universal remark of those who made the overland journey by stage—many of them from "way down East"—that they never saw such fine animals. Holladay was a great lover and a judge of good stock himself. It was the desire and aim of the noted stage man that the line be stocked with the finest horses and mules for staging that could be secured in the country.

The brisk staging period on the frontier was during the civil war, when Government was picking up animals for cavalry service and good horse-flesh commanded big prices. The best judges only were employed by the stage company to buy. Most of the teams in use on the line were well matched, although among a few there was a decided contrast. Some of them, perfect in build, were the most lovely white, while others, just as nicely built, were of a jet black. Then there were some nicely matched, beautiful bays—both of a dark and light shade; there were also some equally fine teams of a chestnut color; a number of handsome roans; the most lovely dapple-grays; occasionally a team of "buckskins"; and some splendidly matched sorrels and iron-grays. Buffalo Bill for some time in the later '60's drove a fine team of four grays west from Fort Kearney. (See page 101.) One of the best teams on the road—four handsome bays—was driven about twelve miles, between two stations west of the Big Blue and east of the Big Sandy. The off leader was perfectly blind. I used to feel sorry for this horse, and thought it a shame to drive the poor animal; still he could pull his share of the load and get over the road about as lively as any horse with perfect eyes. Besides, there were a number of splendid mule teams. Regarding the worth of most of the horses, there seemed little if any difference in them. They were all first-class animals; in fact, Ben. Holladay had no use for inferior stock.

W. L. H. MILLAR.
R. P. R. MILLAR.
See Pages 80, 81.

AN INDIAN VILLAGE ON THE PLATTE.

CHAPTER XXII.

INCIDENTS OF THE "OVERLAND."

ONLY a few decades ago the country surrounding and adjacent to Fort Kearney was the home of the once powerful tribe of Pawnee Indians. The region a short distance west of this important military post was occupied by a still more powerful tribe of Sioux. Between the two tribes was a stretch of intervening territory claimed by both. As might readily be inferred, there was almost from the first constant war between them, and this naturally diminished the numbers of each tribe. But the Sioux in nearly every engagement proved greatly superior to the Pawnees as warriors, and were almost invariably victorious over them; hence it was not long until the Pawnees were disposed to be on friendly terms with the adjacent white settlers, though the settlers were few in numbers.

The Pawnees appeared to be in the height of their glory when they were harassing the Sioux, as they frequently did by stealing their ponies. The Sioux, however, never lost an opportunity to retaliate, and at times would succeed in almost annihilating entire bands of Pawnee warriors. The Sioux also seemed friendly to the whites, and both tribes, singular as it may appear, continued friendly with the whites until the Cheyenne and Sioux war broke out at Plum Creek, thirty-five miles west of Fort Kearney, in August, 1864, resulting in the Comanches joining the other hostile tribes. The final outcome was an Indian war—premeditated and cunningly planned—on the greatest traveled wagon road in the West, involving that part of the country for hundreds of miles.

The conflict was waged along the Platte and Little Blue rivers with all the horrors practiced in Indian warfare. Through that part of the country along the route of the overland stage line it was the worst. Here a large number of innocent white people were horribly butchered; defenseless women outraged and carried away captive; a number of homes made desolate; stage stations and ranch cabins burned; stock stolen and run off, and thousands of dollars' worth of private property destroyed.

The great military road laid out nearly a half-century ago from Fort Leavenworth to the Northwest, on which the overland stages ran in the '50's and '60's, passed through the counties of Leavenworth, Atchison, Nemaha, Marshall, and the northeast portion of Washington county, in Kansas; thence a little northwesterly into Nebraska and along the Little Blue river, through Jefferson, Thayer, Nuckolls, the southwest corner of Clay, through Adams and Kearney counties, striking the Platte river at Hook's Station (since known as "Dogtown"), just east of the Fort Kearney military reservation; thence the line followed up along the south bank of the Platte, past Fort Kearney, through Phelps, Gosper, Dawson, Lincoln and Perkins counties, Nebraska, crossing the Colorado line a short distance east of old Julesburg.

About 100 miles west of Fort Kearney was another military post, established in the fall of 1863, and christened Fort McPherson. It was located but a short distance from the south bank of the Platte, the foot-hills being a mile or so from the stage station. While the location did not appear to be a very good one, looking at it from a military standpoint, in a section of country occupied by many tribes of hostile Indians, nevertheless it proved to be a valuable post the year following its establishment, when the hostiles for several months, in 1864, had almost undisputed possession of the great overland stage and military wagon road. Fort McPherson was of great value during the Indian troubles of those days, but many years have passed since it, like Fort Kearney, was abandoned.

The military reservation at Fort McPherson—a tract covering sixteen square miles—still exists as such. On the reservation is the old Government cemetery, containing a little over 100 acres. The graves in it cover several acres. A neat and substantially built brick wall surrounds the cemetery. The grounds are kept in order by a man specially employed by Government for that purpose. The cemetery is adorned by a number of monuments erected to the memory of the dead and honored heroes.

While making his Goverment expedition across the country and along the Platte in 1843, Col. John C. Fremont celebrated the Fourth of July in that vicinity, a few miles west of Cottonwood Springs, but on the north bank of the South Platte, near the junction of the north fork, not far from Buffalo Bill's ranch, near where the prosperous town of North Platte is now located.

As near as can be ascertained, the first building erected at Cottonwood Springs was in 1858. It was used as a trading ranch. The place derives its name from a spring, in the vicinity of which was quite a cluster of cottonwood trees, which appeared to thrive nicely while left undisturbed. But later the trees were rapidly thinned out by the army of pilgrims and freighters on their way up and down the valley along the great thoroughfare.

Aside from the stage station, stables, grain warehouse, and a store or two, there never was much of a town at Cottonwood Springs. It was, however, during staging and overland freighting days, a valuable location; and, being only a short distance west from Fort McPherson, it was naturally thus made still more valuable. Cottonwood Springs was situated about midway between the Missouri and the Rockies, near a great body of fine cedar, and was looked upon as an important point by all in early days who drove oxen and mules and traveled the overland route. It was especially important to the stage officials, for it was a "home" station and a depot of general supplies. There was also a telegraph office in the building, and it was the half-way point between Fort Kearney and old Julesburg.

Much of the country between Fort Kearney and Cottonwood Springs was the home of the buffalo and antelope in the days of overland traffic, especially during the later '50's and early '60's. Often vast droves of the shaggy bison, numbering many thousands, could be seen along the line at different points. In the vicinity of Plum Creek appeared to be a favorite spot for them to roam. Their trails were in plain sight of there leading south into the sandy bluffs. That locality appeared to be the heart of the buffalo region on the Platte. While crossing the plains in the early '60's, we kept a close watch for buffalo in that vicinity. We seldom ate a meal between Fort Kearney and old Julesburg, in staging days, that was not made up in part of choice, juicy steaks or superb roasts cut from the wild, "crooked-back" oxen. Men in charge of the numerous trains of white-covered prairie-schooners lived largely on fresh buffalo meat, which was substituted for bacon and dry sides, while crossing the plains in those days.

In 1866 an immense amount of damage was done by the savages, nearly every station between old Julesburg and Fort Kearney (excepting Plum Creek) being wiped out, and a large amount of grain, hay and other stage property destroyed.

There was much trouble with the Indians for a long distance on the Platte in 1867, after the stage line had passed into the control of Wells, Fargo & Co. Nearly all the stations on the route for about 100 miles, between Julesburg and Bijou, having been burnt in the summer and fall of 1864, necessitating the erection of new buildings, these also were destroyed in 1867. Before stage traffic could be resumed it was necessary to again rebuild them. The last ones erected cost from $5000 to $7000 each.

Everything on the Platte in the line of forage afterwards ruled high. Hay brought, in 1867, $125 a ton, while wood sold as high as $150 a cord. There was considerable trouble, also, in 1867, still farther west, up in the mountains, when the Indians made a raid on Bridger's Pass, killing six men and burning a number of stage stations.

In 1868 there was occasional trouble with the Indians in the vicinity of Cottonwood Springs, on the route over which the Government mule freight-trains and the overland stages daily passed. It was natural for the Indians to steal and run off stock, not only from the ranchmen in the neighborhood, but from parties crossing the plains with their private outfits. It was a favorite pastime of the redskins to attack small numbers of white men, and their cowardly work was becoming of frequent occurrence. In the attacks a number of small parties were killed and scalped, their property stolen or destroyed, and their stock run off.

The Indian war, as already mentioned, which began in the summer of 1864, greatly interfered with overland staging and freighting for several weeks. To continue traffic as matters then existed was almost an impossibility. As a precaution and for better protection, it was found necessary to station a few soldiers at frequent intervals for 300 miles along the south side of the Platte. The stage-coaches which carried the mail, trundling across the plains west of Fort Kearney, when the road was subsequently reopened, were attended by a small guard of mounted soldiers, who were detailed for that duty from the several military posts along the Platte. All other traffic on the plains having become practically ruined, the emigrant and freight outfits along the route were formed into large trains by uniting the individual outfits, and thus going on their way together. The men in these consolidated trains organized and drilled for their better protection. The most important thing was to provide themselves with suitable arms and ammunition. Being thus prepared for resisting attack, and always alert against surprise, they were able to resist, should occasion require, a considerable body of Indians.

Outbreaks among the hostile tribes along the Platte continued at intervals all through 1869, but the two military posts within a distance of 100 miles changed the location of the trouble to the southward, along the head waters of the Republican river. The base of operations for the soldiers in that vicinity was at Fort McPherson, and General Carr was in command. Besides the regular mounted soldiers stationed at this post, there was a band of some 300 Pawnee Indians, in command of Maj. Frank North; and William F. Cody ("Buffalo Bill") had command of a band of scouts on the frontier. He was chief of the band, and under his guidance the pursuits after the Sioux were made. The Pawnees and Sioux were, as has been indicated, deadly enemies; hence it will be more readily understood why the former tendered their services to the Government and engaged in a war against the Sioux. This band of 300 Pawnees organized in 1867, and had by this time become the most thoroughly drilled soldiers on the frontier. But, like most Indians, they were a peculiar class of beings. They could not be induced to don the regular suit provided by "Uncle Sam," but dressed usually in a sort of combination garb, which they thought more appropriate, or, at least, that they imagined was better fitted to their individual and peculiar tastes.

At a public gathering and dress parade the officers tried to show them off to the visitors to the best advantage as soldiers. The result was rather ludicrous. In his autobiography, Buffalo Bill, chief of scouts at the time, speaking of this "grand review" held on the grounds at the fort, in the hot summer weather—the mercury up to ninety in the shade—describes the 300 Pawnees as they appeard in "full dress," as follows:

> "The Pawnee scouts were also reviewed, and it was very amusing to see them in their 'full regulation uniform.' They had been furnished with regulation cavalry uniform, and on this parade some of them had their heavy overcoats on; others their large black hats, with all the brass accouterments attached; some of them wore pantaloons, and others only wore breech-clouts. Others only wore regulation pantaloons but no shirt, and were bareheaded; others again had the seat of their pantaloons cut out, having only leggins; some wore brass spurs, but had neither boots nor moccasins. With all this melange of oddity, they understood the drill remark-

ably well for Indians. The commands, of course, were given to them in their own language by Major North, who could talk it as well as any full-blooded Pawnee."

After the Union Pacific railway was finished from Omaha to a point on the north side of the Platte adjacent to Fort Kearney, in the fall of 1866, staging along the "Overland" between Atchison and the old military post was done away with. Not only this, but the bulk of merchandise transported by the white-covered prairie-schooners continued to "grow small by degrees and beautifully less." Neither horses, mules nor oxen could compete with the iron horse in moving freight overland. The frequent stage stations were forever abandoned. The men who kept the trading posts at convenient distances were forced to abandon their premises and seek other localities.

The advance of the Union Pacific was too rapid for the skulking savages. It is told that an engineer of a construction train, while on the plains coming around a curve, saw a body of hostile Indians waiting on each side of the road, a number of them being crowded closely together, forming what they deemed an obstruction on the track. In an instant the engineer comprehended the situation. To stop the train he knew was certain death to him and the entire crew; and he knew it meant a death preceded by those horrible atrocities almost invariably practiced by the red men. So, blowing the shrill whistle and opening wide the throttle, he pushed through the obstruction, and killed or crippled those who were not active enough to get out of the way. A shower of bullets greeted the rapidly moving train as it went thundering through their ranks, and an examination showed that the front part of the engine was red with blood.

Some of the ranchmen, after the great tide of travel by team had been wiped out, and their home market thus destroyed, were forced to seek locations elsewhere. The continuous passing of freight wagons and stage and emigrant outfits ceased, and not one team could be seen where were hundreds in the palmy days of overland transportation. The modern and speedy, and vastly more comfortable, railroad-train had occupied the realm of the bull-whacker; the sharp crack of the driver's whip was lost in the shrill whistle of the locomotive; the thundering of great trains across the dusty plains soon scattered the skulking bands of Indians, and a day of progress was ushered in that led rapidly up to the present extraordinary development of all the great states that constitute the trans-Missouri region.

"Give us the latest war news" was a stereotyped phrase asked of the messenger and stage passengers on the plains hundreds of times during the exciting "unpleasantness" waging in the early '60's. Nearly all the parties then engaged in overland freighting were extremely anxious to learn everything they could regarding the movements of the contending armies. It was somewhat difficult in those days to get late and reliable news on the plains, for the first telegraph office reached after leaving Atchison was at Fort Kearney, on the Platte, more than 250 miles out, and thence west telegraph stations were about fifty miles apart.

In the spring of 1863, I made up my mind that General Grant —who for a long time had been in the siege of Vicksburg— would occupy that city on the Fourth of July. Something told me that the nation's birthday anniversary was the most appropriate time for the consummation of such an important event. I intimated to a number of stage-drivers and others that, in all probability, the general would dine on the Fourth of July in Vicksburg. All knew at the time that Vicksburg was a city considered almost impregnable, and few could then realize that the place would be taken for months to come. As the stage was coming east from Denver, sure enough, on its arrival at Fort Kearney, in the afternoon, the glorious news was received by telegraph. At the station it was told to a load of stage passengers that the renowned military chieftain was occupying Vicksburg, and that the stars and stripes were floating over the great Mississippi stronghold. The occasion was the eighty-seventh anniversary of the nation's birth, and one that made all true Union men rejoice. After listening to the reading of the dispatch, every man who came down on the stage threw his hat into the air, and three rousing cheers were at once sent up for Grant and the Union.

The steady advance of civilization long years ago drove the prairie-dog, like the shaggy bison, westward beyond the Mississippi and Missouri rivers. For many years the home of the little animal was almost exclusively on the plains and prairies between the "Big Muddy" and the Rockies. Much of that region having become partially settled, and the dogs naturally increasing in numbers, some of the animals seem to have emigrated. Their villages are now visible west of the Snowy Range—the dogs, apparently, having climbed over the mountains, and thousands are at this time making their homes on the western slope of the continental divide.

During the later '60's I saw the prairie-dog villages along both the Atlantic and Pacific slopes of the Rocky Mountains. In the early '80's I noticed them on the western slope, in some places at an elevation of near 9000 feet above sea-level. Along the railroads stretching from the Missouri to the Rockies, their towns and cities can still be seen at intervals, where vast numbers of the little animals continue to make their homes.

It is popularly supposed that of all burrowing animals the prairie-dog is the most worthless. That this supposition is erroneous may be guessed from the fact that a western Kansas man is said to be making a great success in buying and tanning prairie-dog hides. He has been operating in a local way for some time, but not long since an order came to him from a New York house for hides, and now he expects to go into the business quite extensively. A newspaper published in the "short grass" region says:

> "And this is another important and reliable resource which has opened for Kansas. Procrastinated precipitation and predatory hexapods may destroy the corn and wheat, but the prairie-dog we have always with us. If we can take his hide and sell it to Eastern plutocrats, to be used in the manufacture of beaver muffs and sealskin sacks, we may laugh at hot winds and snap our fingers under the proboscis of the devastating chinch-bug."

In the early '60's the little dogs were to be found in their abiding-places by the thousands, and their presence even at this date shows that they still hold forth at the old location. Along the Platte, in overland staging days, we would go through occasional "towns"—in fact, "cities"—some of them many miles long. Often, when the dogs appeared, they would be the first animals of the kind the passengers ever set eyes on. If the passengers were of a sporting nature there would at once be fun ahead. The "towns" extended some distance to the north and south of the road. One after another of the passengers would yank out his six-shooter and forthwith begin peppering away from either side of the stage at the little dogs, that would sit up on their haunches by the side of their houses for a few seconds and, wagging their tails briskly, would keep up a lively barking at the passers-by, and, as the stage would be getting pretty close, then dodge quickly into their holes.

Playing with a pet prairie-dog.

It was not unusual at those times for half a dozen passengers to be engaged at the same time in the exciting pastime of blazing away at prairie-dogs only a few rods distant. If any were so fortunate as to kill one of the little animals, nine chances out of ten he would be unable to get it, for, if shot, a prairie-dog instantly rolls over into his hole and that is usually the last seen of him. Underneath their towns, it is said, the earth is completely honeycombed; that their paths run in all directions, to every hole in their "town." To drown them out by pouring water in their abiding-places is an impossibility.

At Valley Station, on the South Platte, in the summer of 1863, the keeper had a pet prairie-dog—the first domesticated one I had ever seen. While playing with it one afternoon on my way east from Denver, as the stage teams were being changed, the little animal caught hold of the first joint of one of my fingers and bit through it to the nail. With all the tenacity of a genuine bulldog, the "pet" hung on and would n't let go. I tried to shake him off and could n't. The harder I shook him the tighter he clung; so I raised my arm and swung him once or twice around my head, and, with a sudden jerk, threw him at least ten feet high and fully three rods away. In swinging the animal round his weight tore the flesh from my finger, badly lacerating it, and he fell heavily to the ground, remaining insensible for a few seconds, but recovered and ran into the station.

The stage boys saw me going through some unusually queer antics—dancing around like a chicken with its head cut off and yelling like a wild Comanche—trying to shake off the "pet." They all looked at me and laughed at the fun; they thought it a splendid show, but I could n't see anything especially funny to laugh at. On the contrary, I never before felt so much like swearing; but on this occasion I was like the fellow who thought he was unable to do the subject justice. The station keeper was a looker-on, and witnessed all the fun; so he joined in with the drivers and laughed just as heartily as they. After it was all over, he tried to console me by saying that the dog was merely "playing with me"; but all this I felt was little consolation. In consequence of the bite I suffered intense pain for hours; but I have something to show for the "fun." It is a scar that I shall carry as long as life lasts, which will make me remember until the end that "pet" prairie-dog.

Speaking of prairie-dogs, we are reminded that a pair of the animals, in the '80's, by some means got to Lawrence, Kan., and, according to a paper, "located in the Union Pacific park. They were not disturbed, and they multiplied rapidly, until now they hold possession of about ten square rods in the park, and number several hundred. They have not disturbed the gardens in the vicinity, and they are very tame. The citizens feed them with cabbages during the winter. The 'town' is increasing its limits rapidly, and it may not be long before Lawrence will have to take up arms against the little animals."

During my various trips on the overland stage, I took but one drink of liquor, but I refused 126 invitations to "take something" on my first round trip across the plains, in January and February, 1863. It was during the spring of that year, while going west between Valley and Beaver Creek stations, that I was caught in one of the worst storms I ever experienced on the plains. On this trip I had forgotten to take my rubber coat with me. My clothes were soaked to my skin. The rain was followed by sleet for some time, winding up with such a blinding snow-storm that it was with difficulty we could see the leaders. Before I was aware of it I was nearly frozen, while thus facing the fierce nor'wester, with every stitch of clothing covering me wet through.

The driver had on a gum coat and was safe from the storm, but I was thoroughly chilled and, with my clothing frozen stiff, could hardly move. The nine passengers inside the coach saw that I was in a serious condition and that something must be done for me at once. One of them volunteered to change seats with me. He had a bottle of brandy, and, pouring out a glassful, he gave it to me. I drank it, but felt no more ill effects than if it had been so much sweet cider or water. It was apparently just what I needed at the time, and it probably saved me from a dangerous spell of sickness—perhaps saved my life; but had I drank one-fourth the amount under other conditions there is little doubt that I would have been a fit subject for the calaboose, and, in due time, perhaps, working out a fine on the rock pile.

In the spring of 1863, while making my third or fourth trip as messenger on the overland stage line between Atchison and Denver, I had an experience that furnished an incident I shall never forget. At Fort Kearney, on the way west, I was notified by several of the stage men that there was a man just getting over the smallpox, who was anxious to get to his home in Denver. He was isolated, in a little log building, a few rods west of the stage station, and sent for me to come and see him; he wanted to talk with me. I went to his room and saw him, and he told me a truly pitiable tale; how he was taken sick on his way home and obliged to stop there; and how, like a dog, he had been lying in his present dingy quarters for two or three weeks, apparently shunned like a viper, and how his family and his business at Denver required his immediate presence, etc.

His face, as he looked at me, presented a horrible sight. It resembled a pounded beefsteak more than it did that of a human being, and I hardly knew, under the circumstances, what to do. There was no seat for him or any one else in the stage. He was a stranger to me and had his passage paid to Denver; but the agent of the stage line at Fort Kearney had refused to allow him a seat in the coach, owing to the vigorous protests that had been made by the passengers. For five minutes or more we talked the matter over. I told him there was no room on the coach for a passenger; besides, I thought it dangerous, not only for himself but for others going overland, to take him along. There was danger of his taking cold, which would complicate matters and make his case, in my mind, extremely critical. He recognized the possible dangers, but he was getting desperate. He assured me that he was perfectly willing, so far as he was individually concerned, to take all risks.

It so happened on that trip that I was all alone, but I had a full coach load of express packages, and there was not a passenger out of Atchison for the West. There was something in the man's eye and the tone of his conversation that pleased me. I wanted to accommodate him, if possible to do so. Remembering that I had had a siege of varioloid six years before, and that I was supposed to be proof against the smallpox myself, I told the stranger that I was all alone and would try and make "room for one more"; and that if he could put up with such accommodations as I could fix for him he could go through with me. He assured me that he could put up with anything.

I rearranged the boxes and packages as best I could, and spread his robe and blankets on top of them so he could lie down quite comfortably, but it was out of the question to fix one of the coach seats for him. The fact that he was allowed to go with me appeared to be one of the happiest events of his life. At once his heretofore despondent feelings changed, and he appeared like a different person. I inquired of the stranger his name, and learned it was George Tritch. He kept a small stove and tin-shop in a little rough, one-story frame building on the west side of F street (Fifteenth), a few doors north of Blake street.

For nearly 400 miles we had the coach all to ourselves. At night I turned in with my companion, and, with the assistance of my robe and blankets, we had a bed good enough for a Pullman car, and slept together all the way up the Platte for four nights. Several way-passengers along the route wanted a seat in the stage, but the sight of "the gentleman from Denver" scared them away in a hurry, particularly after learning he had just got out of bed from a terrible siege of smallpox.

During the trip I did everything I possibly could for my unfortunate companion. Every hour we seemed to get better acquainted. We had both traveled the "rough and rugged road" years before, and soon became the warmest friends. During those four days and nights we had a jolly good time, for the sick man had somehow forgotten that he had ever been sick. I found him a pleasant, warm-hearted, genial traveling companion, a pleasant conversationalist, and we became quite devotedly attached during the long, monotonous stage ride. That was more than a third of a century ago, when we were both young men (he a few years my senior), but the time has swept swiftly by.

Mr. Tritch was one of the Denver pioneers, and, although I had not seen him for nearly a score of years, I can never forget him and the good opinion I formed of him on our journeying together by stage up the Platte years before a railroad had been built across the plains. I am pleased to learn that, for a quarter of a century, he was one of the foremost business men of Denver, independently wealthy, an honored, highly esteemed citizen, of whom the entire city and the great state of Colorado could justly feel proud. While I was in the employ of the overland stage line in the early '60's Mr. Tritch often saw me and thanked me for the kindness and attention I had shown him at a time that then appeared the darkest and most gloomy days of his early life. He died at his home in Denver in 1899.

Sometimes there would be a load of jolly passengers who, finding it impossible to sleep for the first few nights out, would want to do something to relieve the monotony of the long, tedious stage ride. It frequently happened that some one of the number would have a pack of cards in his pocket, and a game of whist, euchre or old sledge would be indulged in for pastime. Now and then there would be some one who thought there was hardly enough fascination about such amusement, and a change would be made to the more exciting game of poker.

At intervals during the civil war I saw poker played by people crossing the plains by stage when the "ante" would be nothing less than a five-dollar greenback. Many of the passengers were provided with apparatus for lights on the trip. Although the lights were far from being equal to the dazzling brilliancy of the modern electric, or even the kerosene light, in reality they were not much ahead of the old-time tallow dip used in the backwoods a half-century ago. Under the circumstances, the light appeared to answer all purposes—even for the entertaining game they were so enthusiastically engaged in.

But, in gambling, some one must always lose. Complaints were made in due time to the division agents by some of the passengers who had, as they claimed, been "roped in" and had lost heavily at the exciting game. An effort was made by the officials to stop passengers from gambling in the stage-coaches while *en route*, but it was found an impossibility to enforce any such edict.

Not infrequently there were some good singers among a coach load of passengers, and they would now and then entertain their fellows, whiling away the weary hours with some of their choicest vocal pieces. At times they would be singing some of the sweetest hymns; then again a change would be made to a comic or some lively patriotic song. Occasionally there were some good story-tellers among them, and they would entertain their companions with yarns that perhaps were not always as moral and chaste in character as they should have been, but they served to prevent an attack of the dyspepsia. Now and then there would be a passenger who would deliver to the "large and respectable" audience inside a regular broadside speech on politics or some other topic. If it happened to be the Fourth of July, a sort of "spread eagle" discourse was almost sure to be forthcoming.

While making a journey in the summer of 1863, I well remember a half-dozen through passengers on their college vacation overland. In the party there appeared to be a little of everything going on and much that never ought to have been tolerated in a civilized community. The party was composed of a sort of seemingly good-natured fellows, but there was apparently nothing in the way of college scrapes and deviltry that they were not versed in. They were all splendid talkers and could sing nicely, but they were a sacrilegious crowd.

With sanctimonious faces, in all solemnity, they would go through with the services of an old-fashioned revival. First, all would join in singing a good, old Methodist hymn; "Parson Jones" would offer a short prayer and preach a brief but able discourse; "Elder Brown" would then give out a hymn in which the "congregation" would all join and sing; "Deacon Smith" would then make a fervent prayer; then "Brother Obadiah" and "Brother Hezekiah" would give their experience, and tell "how good they felt" to be there.

When the "exercises" were about drawing to a close, "Brother Johnson" suggested that, as one of the most important parts of the meeting was likely to be overlooked, he would call their attention to the indispensable duty of passing the contribution box, at the same time exhorting the "brethering" to shell out liberally to help on his back salary and to liquidate a long standing church debt. His hat was substituted for the box and passed around, without getting a cent. After an examination of the result of the "collection," the "parson" returned thanks for getting his hat back. He then gave out a hymn beginning:

"Oh, what a wretched land is this
That yields me no supply."

"Deacon Smith" suggested that they ought to close by singing the "sockdologer." The order of exercises was then changed. The demijohn was passed and each drank freely. Then they sang another hymn, and this was followed by a talk. In a short time they had all become boozy and were somewhat boisterous. Another "good old hymn" was sung, winding up with a sacrilegious effusion:

"Bring forth the royal demijohn
And we will drink it all."

In a short time the outcome was a regular old-fashioned carousal. A sort of rough and tumble play followed, in which all took a hand; then came a knock-down argument; and the final result was blows and black eyes and bloody noses, which so soon had taken the place of the solemn (?) proceedings that had occurred a few minutes before.

Soon all the party, "too full for utterance," fell asleep. When they had partially sobered, and one by one awoke from the debauch, for a little while all was silence. Each looked at the other in amazement, it being almost impossible for any of them, with their faces covered with blood, their eyes bunged and blackened, and noses swelled, to recognize a familiar countenance. After eyeing each other with anything but sanctimonious countenances, the silence was broken when one of the number volunteered the old, familiar scriptural passage: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

In the summer of 1863, one of the passengers coming down from Denver on the messenger stage-coach with me was a preacher who had been making an overland journey to the Pacific coast. The stage reached Big Sandy station (something more than a day's ride from the Missouri river) about midnight on Saturday. The preacher had talked genuine orthodox religion all the way from Denver, and, while he could n't induce any of the passengers to stop off with him over Sunday, he decided to stop by himself. A day's stop-over, he said, would n't delay him long; besides, he could n't think of traveling on the Sabbath.

Failing to get any passengers to stop off with him, he tried his best to get me to join him, and remain over Sunday with him at Sandy until the arrival of the east-bound coach. He was an earnest talker, but with all his forcible entreaties he failed to fetch me to time. He waited patiently at the station for twenty-four hours, and the sight of the next coach coming in from California was something extremely pleasant to him. With grip in hand, and greatly refreshed from his Sabbath-day rest after so long a stage ride, he was ready to take his seat in the old Concord, but was soon sorely disappointed. The stage-coach happened to be crowded with through passengers, and there was no room either inside or on top of the vehicle for another person. The old adage "always room for one more" did n't seem to work in this instance. The Gospel expounder for the time being was stumped—could n't tell what to do. His business, he argued, was extremely urgent. He tried to reason with Ed. Farrell, the station agent at Sandy—insisted that he had a right to a seat; but he was told that, according to the rules of the stage company, he had forfeited his seat by stopping off; his only alternative now was to wait until there was room.

This the preacher undoubtedly knew to be true; still he was so anxious to get away he could not help reasoning with the agent. It was not long until he began to realize that he must put in another long twenty-four hours at the station. The arrival of the next stage-coach east-bound gave him no relief; for, like the one that had preceded this one, it, too, was crowded with through passengers, and the excited, anxious preacher was again obliged to stop at least another day. The next stage from the west arrived on time, and, to the mortification of the learned divine, it also was crowded; so was the next one, and the next, and the next. Five stages from the west continued to arrive for that number of days in succession, each one so filled with passengers that there was not room for another.

Finally, by mere chance, he was able, after waiting six days and nights at Big Sandy, to get a seat. As he climbed up into the old coach the drivers and all around the station eagerly watched him. When they saw he was to get away at last they thought he was one of the happiest men they ever saw. He certainly was glad to get away; but he did not reach Atchison until the following Sunday morning, just as the bells were ringing and the churchgoing people on their way to the various houses of worship throughout the city. He spent the Sabbath at the Massasoit House, speaking in the evening at one of the churches, having had a week in which to prepare a special "broadsider" for the occasion. He opened his batteries on the overland stage line. The principal part of his remarks were in denouncing, in most severe terms, the officials and nearly every one else in any manner connected with Ben. Holladay's stage line.

Many a time, way out on the plains as far as one could see, have I noticed, while sitting on the stage-box with the driver, a tiny cloud of dust, but could only conjecture what might have caused it. Small as it appeared at first, it would steadily grow larger and, for a few moments, invariably set one to thinking and asking himself "What is it?" Who knows but it might be a squad of cavalry scouting along the Platte; possibly it might be a band of hostile savages preparing for the war-path; or perhaps it might be a train of ox or mule overland freight wagons. No one at first could tell. The cloud was becoming larger and rapidly drawing nearer. We knew that it would not be long until our curiosity would be gratified. Soon it was discovered to be the approaching stage-coach, which could now and then be seen in spite of the dust, as it rounded a curve and gently rocked to and fro on its thoroughbraces. The two vehicles were steadily coming nearer together. Only a minute or two more and the prancing, foaming steeds hitched to the two Concords had drawn up and stopped alongside each other. After the drivers had exchanged the usual "Howdy," and perhaps with a laugh or a joke, or "Give me a chaw of tobacker," or "Will you join me in a drink of 'tarantula juice'?" each would then throw the lash into his leaders, and the two vehicles were almost instantly moving away from each other towards the rising and setting sun.

In making one of my trips in the summer of 1863, the stage stopped a few minutes at a ranch on the South Platte just in time for us to hear the wagon bosses of two ox trains trying to settle some trifling dispute. The two men were once old friends and doing business together, but they were now at outs. The longer they continued arguing, the farther apart they seemed to be from a settlement. Both were armed, and first it looked to an outsider as if a shooting scrape was inevitable. I never learned how they adjusted their differences; but if one could believe half what each said, both were awfully mean men. In arguing they became extremely personal, and alternately, in rapid succession, continued to bombard each other with a string of "chin music" that was especially forcible if not elegant. When the stage moved away, apparently they were no nearer a settlement, but still exchanging vulgar epithets. They shook their fists defiantly, and the vilest maledictions appeared to roll from their tongues as easily as water runs off a duck's back.

While on the way east down the South Platte, on one of my trips in the summer of 1863, going from the Bijou to Beaver Creek station, there was an ugly slough several rods wide to cross. As repaired, the road was barely wide enough for two vehicles, by the most careful driving, to pass. The stage company, at considerable expense, had fixed up the crossing in good shape for their own accommodation, and, quite naturally, precedence should be given the fast mail-coach in going across this part of the road. It so happened that, as the east-bound stage came to the west approach, a man west bound, with a single team and spring wagon, at the same instant, reached the east approach. The stage-driver yelled in ample time to the fellow to wait there until he got across. But, instead of doing so, he insultingly replied: "Go to h—, you —— ——." Both started at the same instant, the stage-driver quickly giving his team a cut from the lash, and the animals suddenly dashed ahead. There was a collision. It reminded one a little of two trains attempting to pass each other on a single track. The old-reliable Concord coach came across the slough apparently as sound as the day it left the shops, but the pilgrim was not so fortunate with his vehicle. It was a three-wheeled concern after the collision. Nearly three weeks afterward, when I made my next trip to Denver, the fellow was camping at the same old spot. He had had ample time for reflection, but he got out of there, a few days afterward, doubtless a wiser man, having been obliged to send the demolished wheel more than 100 miles, to Denver, the nearest shop, for repairs.

In the Kearney *Herald* of November 17, 1866, appeared the following items:

> **"A considerable snow-storm occurred on Tuesday evening, and a big frost the same night. The Platte is full of floating ice."**

> **"The Indians killed and scalped a telegraph operator between Kearney and Julesburg a few days ago. Such is their interpretation of Maynadier's treaty."**

> **"General O'Brien is building a pontoon bridge across the Platte opposite Cottonwood, 100 miles west of Kearney, where the overland stage line will connect with the railroad until next spring, or until the railroad reaches Alkali or Julesburg."**

> **"The Sioux and Cheyennes are gritting their angry teeth because the Union Pacific railroad is plowing up their hunting-grounds. Two of their chiefs went over to a train near Cottonwood, a few days ago, and took exact measurement and thickness of the passenger- and freight-cars. They want to make their bows and arrows stout enough to go through the wood and stick into the pale-faces."**

A DISPUTE OVER RIGHT OF WAY. *Page 514.*

CHAPTER XXIII.

MARYSVILLE, MARSHALL COUNTY—THE OKETO CUT-OFF.

IN the northern tier of Kansas, the fourth county west of the Missouri river is Marshall, named for Gen. Frank J. Marshall, its pioneer. It is about 100 miles west of Atchison, the latter being in the second tier of counties from the north. Marshall was the first county in northern Kansas to be settled, and it has always been one of the most prosperous counties in the state. Less than a half-century ago it was swarming with buffalo, where, perhaps for centuries, they had grazed unmolested.

Maj. Stephen H. Long, who made the trip to the Rocky Mountains in 1819–'20, was perhaps one of the first white men who ever crossed what is now Marshall county. Col. J. C. Fremont, in an expedition to the Rocky Mountains, crossed the Big Blue river, as did Brigham Young, the Mormon apostle. The "saints" crossed at the old Mormon, Independence or California crossing, about six miles below the present city of Marysville. For two years following, thousands of exiled Mormons, on their journey across the plains to the "promised land," crossed here, as did vast numbers destined for the first California gold diggings, in 1849 and the early '50's. The great overland trail from Fort Leavenworth to Salt Lake was surveyed by Lieutenant Stansbury in 1849, and the crossing of the Big Blue was fixed by him where since has sprung up the prosperous city of Marysville. An early settler in Marshall county was James McClosky, a Scotchman by birth. He went west, and crossed the Blue river, near the site of Marysville, in 1839. He became an Indian trader among the Sioux on the upper Platte and adopted some of the habits of the Indian. He came to Marshall county in 1854, with a half-dozen other traders and their families, and was invited by Marshall to settle at Marysville.* He accepted the invitation, but the balance of the party settled on the Vermillion. A number of other settlements were made throughout the county early in 1855. A Frenchman, Mr. George Guittard, and his sons, in 1857, settled in the north-

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*So named in honor of Mrs. Mary Marshall.

GEN. F. J. MARSHALL.

MRS. MARY MARSHALL.

COURT-HOUSE,
Built in 1874 by Marysville township, at a
cost of $15,000, and donated to the
county. Destroyed by fire
December 31, 1890.

COURT-HOUSE,
Built in 1891 by the town of Marysville, at a
cost of $40,000, and donated
to the county.

eastern portion of the county, on the great overland military route. They secured a very fine body of land, and in a few years Guittard's station became one of the prominent stopping points on the overland mail line.

In early Kansas territorial days Marysville was a red-hot proslavery town. The first election was held at Marshall's, the upper crossing of the Blue, at Marysville, on March 31, 1855. The Kansas-Nebraska act gave to every "inhabitant" or "actual resident" of the territory the right to vote at that election. The total population of the county was but a score or two, but parties organized in western Missouri came for the time being to be "actual residents" for a day or two—until the election was over and the votes counted. There were only two free-state men in the county, George H. Hollenberg and John D. Wells. The election to vote on the Lecompton constitution took place December 21, 1857. That was a great day in the history of Marysville, and Marshall county could easily have secured the blue ribbon for illegal voting. There were less than a half-dozen log cabins[*] on the town site of Marysville and probably less than 100 *bona fide* voters in the county, but when the count was made it was found that nearly 1000 votes had been cast.

THE OKETO CUT-OFF. From July 1, 1861, to the fall of 1862, the overland stages ran daily on the old military road *via* Guittard's station, through Marysville. There was a sort of rivalry or jealousy that had for some time existed between the county-seat

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[*] In the upper story of one of these cabins the polls were opened by setting a soap box on the head of a whisky barrel as the receptacle for ballots. In case the above-mentioned soap box was filled with ballots, another box was to be substituted. A narrow staircase led to a hole in the ceiling, through which the voter would thrust his hand, holding a ticket, and yell out his name, or the first name he happened to think of, and then would immediately descend, to make room for the next man, absorb a sufficient quantity of "tarantula juice," conjure up a new name, and await his opportunity to vote again. Among the twenty-five or thirty voters present there was a notable personage known by the sobriquet of "Shanghai"—probably so named from his personal appearance. Long before half the day had passed, Shanghai, who had become so thoroughly imbued with patriotism for his party (and whisky) that he could not keep a secret, sprang upon a whisky barrel and exlaimed that he had voted twenty-five times, was going to vote twenty-five times more, and would bet any man $100 that he had outvoted any one in the 'outfit.' Tradition states that the little band of Southern pilgrims stood by and listened with amazement. No one seemed willing to take up the challenge of the champion voter, and the matter was about to go by default, when it was accepted by one of the "pilgrims," the money put up, and a committee appointed to investigate. The result of the investigation showed that Shanghai was beaten, the challenged party having deposited nearly 100 votes. It was also shown that he had possession of a St. Louis business directory, and that he was voting in alphabetical order, and had only got half way through the "A" list!—*A. T. Andreas's History of Kansas, 1883.*

First Methodist Church (South), Marysville, Kan. Purchased by Marshall county, Kansas, in 1863, and used for a courthouse until 1873.

of Marshall and this station. A cut-off, about thirty-five miles long, was talked of by the stage authorities, from Guittard's a little northwesterly, *via* Oketo, across the Otoe reserve, leaving Marysville a few miles to the south. To forestall this action, a new road was laid out from Marysville to Seneca—leaving Guittard's a few miles to the north—by which it was hoped sufficient advantages could be given to induce the overland freighters to travel it as well as the stages; but the scheme did not succeed. The stage company could not be induced to travel the new road.

For some cause Ben. Holladay had a grudge against Marysville, and from the first naturally favored his projected cut-off *via* Oketo. It should be noted, however, that the old road a short distance east of Marysville had for some time been in a wretched condition, as it also was where it crossed Spring creek. This, in a measure, helped on the ill feeling of the stage proprietor against Marysville and that particular portion of the old road. Holliday got permission from the post-office department, and finally decided to change the stage route, leaving the old military road one mile west of Guittard's and going over the Oketo cut-off, on which he and others interested with him had spent a large sum of money.

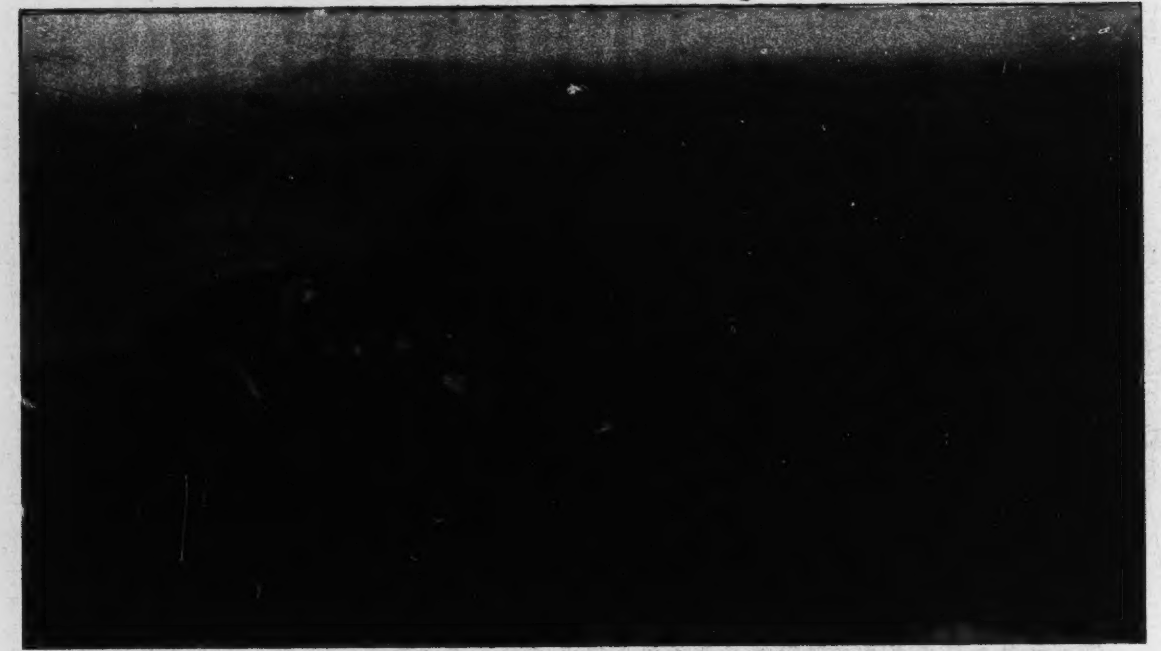
Gen. F. J. Marshall's residence, Marysville, Kan. Built in 1859-'60.

About the middle of October, 1862, the stages began traveling the cut-off. Oketo station was on the Big Blue river, ten miles a little northwest of Guittard's, and about the same distance due north of Marysville. Holladay had a ferry-boat built for crossing the Big Blue at Oketo in high water; he also put in, at considerable expense, bridges and culverts over the small streams and ravines; worked the bad places and fixed up things in good shape, hoping to divert the bulk of the travel over his cut-off. Everything that was done, it seems, only helped to exasperate the people of Marysville, who were already indignant beyond measure at the way things had gone.

Before the change, they were getting their mail three times a week by stage. For a month afterwards they were almost entirely without mail facilities. Finally a man was engaged to carry it on horseback triweekly from Guittard's. A petition was sent to the department from Marysville asking for a daily mail by four-horse coach. A reply was sent to the petitioners cutting the service to semiweekly by horseback. This naturally increased the exasperation of the good people of Marysville, and the department was again petitioned, when the service was cut down to once a month. This of course only enraged them, and a third petition was sent in, after which service was stopped altogether. This was "the straw that broke the camel's back." For some time thereafter, whenever an opportunity offered, the mail for Marysville was sent by ox team and freight train from Guittard's to its destination. Finally a man was hired to carry it regularly between the two offices.

Although it is claimed the stage proprietor was under contract to deliver a mail twice a week at Marysville, for a period of at least four months the arrangements for supplying under the existing contract were of the most miserable kind. Missouri river daily papers—from St. Joseph, Leavenworth, and Kansas City—received in Marysville during that period, were often a month old when they came to hand. But Marysville, the oldest town in the Blue valley, and the most important point between the Missouri river and Denver, was determined on revenge for the wrong that had been done her in this matter.

During a freshet, the ferry-boat on the Big Blue at Oketo, under the cover of darkness, was cut loose by some one—the name of the guilty party was never learned—causing it to float



AN INCIDENT ON THE OKETO CUT-OFF. *Page 523.*

from its moorings. This was a rather severe obstacle to be met by the stage company, causing much annoyance and considerable delay, but it was not the end of the trouble. One night not long afterward a party went out and dug a ditch across the road on the cut-off seven or eight feet long and one or two feet wide. In addition they tore up a stone crossing in a bad slough. That night, as the west-bound stage came up, about ten o'clock, one of its passengers inside was a general of the United States Army. Enoch Cummings, a pioneer plainsman, and one of the earliest of the overland stage-drivers, was on the box. It was dark, and as a natural consequence, he drove into the ditch. The sudden and severe jolt threw him off the seat to the ground. He knew of the bitterness between the town authorities of Marysville and the stage men, and, in an instant, comprehended the situation.

The army official inside the coach was given a sudden and severe shaking up. It was during the war of the rebellion, and he could not have been more surprised had a shell been thrown into the stage-coach from the enemy's ranks in the Confederacy. When asked for the cause of the sudden stopping, the driver explained that it was probably owing to the ill feeling that had for some time been existing between the people of Marysville and Ben. Holladay, at the same time explaining as best he could the whole situation. The general listened to the facts, and at once wrote to the commanding officer at Fort Leavenworth for troops to be sent out to protect the overland mail line and the stage company's private property.

In a few days a detachment of soldiers belonging to the Third Wisconsin Cavalry were detailed for that purpose, and, marching out on the frontier, which was then at the Big Blue, made their headquarters at Marysville. The people, however, who lost their vegetables and chickens, soon became tired of their presence, but there were no more complaints of the outrages which had been charged to the Marysvillians.

In this Oketo cut-off move, it would naturally appear to a person disinterested that Holladay had "cut off his nose to spite his face." He erected new stations on the Otoe reservation and went to great expense in changing the route, in some manner being able to convince the post-office department and other high officials that the new cut-off was a shorter and in many other respects a much better route than *via* Marysville. The stage-drivers and freighters, however, who had traveled the plains and were familiar with both roads, declared the route through Marysville was by far the better and more desirable. It was the old-established military road; the natural highway across the plains to Salt Lake and California after the breaking out of the gold excitement in 1849.

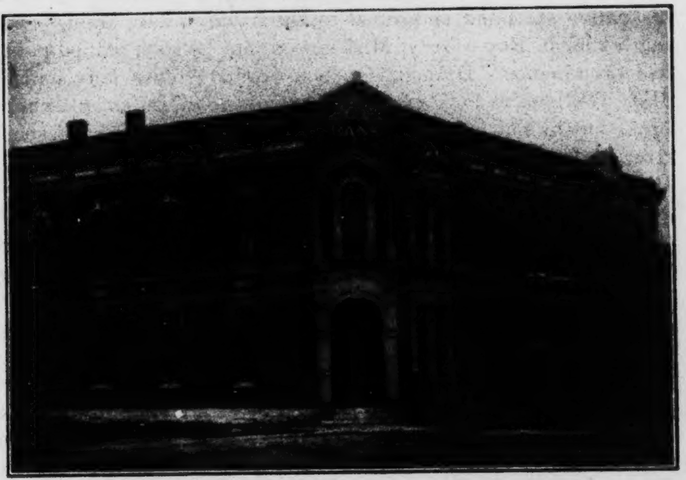
In 1852 the road was lined with emigrants and gold seekers from every state in the Union, going overland for the new El Dorado on the Pacific coast. It finally became one of the most important stage and freight wagon roads in the country. Over it all the travel and Government stores were shipped to Forts Kearney, Laramie, Bridger, and other important military posts throughout the great West and Northwest territories. Hundreds and thousands of teams had for years passed over it, and much of the track was beaten solid and almost as smooth as a floor. The freighters would not and could not, under any circumstances, be induced to travel the cut-off, and the old stage-coach was, for several months, almost the only vehicle that passed over it. Hardly a stage-driver went over the cut-off without relieving himself of a string of adjectives which were decidedly forcible if not very elegant.

There is little doubt that, if the true feelings of Holladay had been known at the time, he was himself heartily sick of his cut-off, for in due time, through his agents, all differences between him and the authorities of Marysville were adjusted, the cut-off was finally declared a failure and abandoned, and the old, original route reestablished, to the satisfaction of all concerned. Holladay evidently had had his revenge on Marysville, but, at the same time, it was at considerable loss financially, for it had cost him at least $50,000. There was about as much rejoicing among the stage employees as among the citizens of the old town when the four-horse Concord coaches began again to make their daily trips east and west through Marysville.

The first stage since the middle of October, 1862, passed through the historic old town on the 4th of March, 1863, having traversed the cut-off at great inconvenience to the traveling public for a period of four and one-half months. In the meantime the people of Marysville had learned to their sorrow that Ben. Holladay, vulgarly speaking, was a veritable buzz-saw, and that it would never do for even a town corporation to "monkey" with him.

There was no finer body of land on the stage route than that

Schmidt & Koester's Exchange Bank, Marysville, Kan., 1870.



Exchange Bank, Marysville, Kan., 1880.

embraced in the Otoe Indian reservation. The most of it was gently rolling prairie, but it was quite well watered and timbered. Only a few acres occupied by the Indians had been broken. However, across the entire body it appeared a lonesome route, having been abandoned by freighters, who traveled it but once, and cautioned all their friends to give it a wide berth when crossing the plains. It was a rare thing to see a freight team on the cut-off, but occasionally would be noticed a band of Otoes, with their squaws and papooses, going over the trails one way or the other, with their ponies, hauling their lodges and the usual paraphernalia required to make up the outfit of the aborigines. Oketo, Otoe and Pawnee were the only stations built by Holladay on this reservation. The former was said to be ten miles distant from Guittard's, the latter thirty-two miles; but to me they seemed the longest miles I ever traveled on the old stage line.

Gen. Frank J. Marshall, the pioneer and founder of Marysville, which town he named in honor of his wife, Mary, was born April 3, 1816, in Lee county, Virginia. He enjoyed a common-school education, finishing his studies with one or two years at the historic William and Mary College. Not long after the closing of the first quarter of the past century, he drifted from his native state and emigrated to the "wild, woolly West," casting his lot in Ray county, Missouri, where he soon gained political prominence. He married an estimable young lady named Mary Williams in 1847. In the California gold excitement, which broke out in the later '40's, he pushed out west of the Missouri river, and settled, as has been mentioned, on the east bank of the Big Blue in 1849, some years before the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska act, and in the heated political struggle that ensued in the '50's he took a prominent part. On the discovery of gold in the Pike's Peak region, in 1858–'59, General Marshall was among the early ones to be carried away by the fabulous reports. He left the old homestead at Marysville, and for many years was prominently engaged in mining in Colorado, being foremost in the development of Gilpin and Clear Creek counties, and subsequently engaged in farming in Boulder county. He built the first house at Marysville and also erected the first brick business house in Denver, and witnessed the unprecedented growth of the place, from its first log cabin, in 1858, until it had become a great city numbering a population of more than 150,000 inhabitants. The

Barrett Hotel, Marysville, Kan., 1860.

Present site of Barrett Hotel, Marysville, Kan.

most of his life was spent west of the Mississippi. He was a lover of the West, knowing that with it were associated most of the stirring scenes of his eventful life. He died in Denver, November 25, 1895, leaving a wife and five children, four sons and one daughter. The *Rocky Mountain News*, the day after his death, closed an editorial on his demise as follows:

> "He has lived to a ripe old age, and, as the grave closes over his mortal remains tomorrow, it will hide from view as generous a heart, as true a friend and as brave a pioneer as reposes within the soil of Colorado."

James S. Magill is one of the old-timers of the Big Blue valley, having settled there on the 8th of July, 1856. Mr. Magill was the first attorney, justice of the peace and county treasurer of Marshall county. He also served as the deputy district clerk of the first district court held by Judge Elmore in the territory, Kansas then being divided into three judicial districts.

On the site of what is now the city of Marysville, there was no finished cabin or house of any kind when he reached there. A log house had been begun and four layers of hewed logs had been put in place, about 16x18 feet, which, when finished a story and a half high, was used by General Marshall as a store, and at which the general elections in those pioneer days were held. The store was on the ground floor, the upper story being used for sleeping-rooms. Mr. Magill says when he arrived there Marshall had two rows of cabins, all one story, on the river bank, near the crossing of the Big Blue. The front row was built of hewed logs, and in this he lived and kept his store. In the fall of 1856 one of the rooms was used a printing-office, in which was published *The Palmetto Kansan*, Joshua E. Clardy, editor, and the Palmetto Town Company, proprietor. The other row of plain log buildings stood back about thirty feet upon the banks of the river, and were used as sleeping-rooms for the overland travel.

Coming to Kansas when it was a territory and he a young man, Mr. Magill has resided in the Blue valley nearly half a century. He has seen his town grow from the first log cabin until it is now a city of several thousand people, having two railroads, churches, schools, library, water-works, electric lights, telephones, mills and manufactories, elegant business blocks, and fine residences.

This house was one of the early buildings erected in Marysville. The main part of it faced north, and was built in 1859 by A. G. Barrett, who, the following year, put on an addition which fronted west. All together the building was about 18x44 feet. It was built of native lumber, hauled twenty miles from Barrett's sawmill, on the Vermillion, to Marysville. The name given the house was the "Barrett Hotel." It was a great improvement to Marysville when it was first erected, being one of the largest hotels on the overland route between the Missouri river and the Rocky Mountains. It was a noted house, and had considerable prominence in early days, for here the pony express and the great overland California stage-coaches used to stop and change horses, and occasionally the stage passengers would stop for meals. For several years in the '60's long mule and ox trains almost daily passed the old house. In the second story the people of Marysville had their balls; religious meetings, sometimes lasting a week, were held in the kitchen and dining-room. The hotel long since became historic. It has had among its guests a large number of pioneer freighters and noted men from all parts of the country—passengers on the stage-coach—who stopped there in the days of overland transportation, more than a third of a century ago, when it was practically the only public house in the Blue valley. After standing for nearly forty years, and being known as the Barrett, Cottrell, American, and Tremont, it was finally torn down in 1899, and in its place stands one of the most commodious and imposing business blocks in the city, built of brick, and owned by White Bros.

Comparatively few of the early landmarks of Marysville are now to be seen, the city having, since the Pacific telegraph wiped out the pony express and the building of the Union Pacific railroad stopped travel by the overland stage-coach, seen great changes. The old town has made such a remarkable growth that most of the early structures have had to give way to more substantial and costly buildings, which add greatly to one of the most progressive cities in northern Kansas—the great frontier point between Atchison and Denver, in the palmy days of overland staging and ox and mule traffic.

Capt. Perry Hutchinson, who runs one of the largest and best flouring-mills in the Big Blue valley, is an old-timer of Marysville and one of the prominent citizens of Marshall county. He came to Kansas in 1859, shortly after the Pike's Peak gold discovery, when the mining excitement was running high and when it cost a large sum of money to go across the plains by the over-

Broadway, Marysville, Kan., 1880.

A Saturday on Broadway, in Marysville.

land stage. Fond of adventure on the frontier at that early day, he conceived the idea of taking a load of ten passengers by the Platte route to Denver. In the spring of 1860 he fixed up a wagon in suitable condition for traveling and started off on the journey, driving the team himself all the way through, camping by the roadside at night. He received, for transporting his party, $400. This amount of money seemed a large sum to him. The new mining craze was up to fever heat in several camps. He struck out from Denver and went into the mountains, where fabulously rich strikes had been reported, and where, he believed, he could soon amass a fortune; but his anticipations were not realized. On the contrary, misfortune soon overtook him and almost every dollar he had disappeared. The attractions of the Blue valley in Kansas—one of the richest agricultural regions in the state, with its immense water-power—seemed good enough for him. He returned, and located at Marysville, where he has resided for more than forty years, and is one of the most progressive and wealthy citizens in his county. During the civil war he enlisted and served his country honorably, going into the service in the Thirteenth Kansas Volunteers, and coming out as captain. In 1880 he represented his county in the legislature, and since that time has taken quite an active part in politics, and has always been one of the foremost in the development of the industries of his city, county, and state.

In the early days of Marysville there were a number of prominent characters in the old town, among them a son of the Emerald isle named James Gray, but every one spoke of him as Jim Gray. A peculiarity of his dress was the same coat and plug hat that he wore in "ould Ireland." But he was a kind-hearted, whole-souled fellow, and it was charged that he himself was his worst enemy. However, in many respects he was a popular man in his town, and in pioneer days, when politics in that locality were overwhelmingly Democratic, he was nominated by his friends and elected sheriff of Marshall county. Politically he was a dyed-in-the-wool Democrat, but apparently he had no more conception of the principles that made up a genuine Jacksonian or Jeffersonian Democrat than a Comanche Indian has of the duties of a United States ambassador to the court of St. James.

A great many stories were from time to time told at the expense of Jim but doubtless some of them were invented by political enemies; hence could not be verified. Here is one, however, that is vouched for as true. Having been chosen "high sheriff of Marshall county," it was customary for the people to select Gray as chairman of all the Democratic meetings and caucuses held in the town. The usual place of holding all such gatherings was in the old court-house, and he was supposed to be the proper custodian of the county's property. One time it was announced that a grand rally of the Democracy would be held at the court-house at a designated hour on a certain evening. When the time arrived for opening the meeting, the "unterrified" had assembled there *en masse.* The crowd waited a long time for Gray. Finally he came into the room, after another chairman had been chosen. He could not understand how the meeting could proceed with any other man as presiding officer, and, in a fine rage, said: "What are yez all doing here? Why the divil's father do n't yez organize?"

The crowd laughed and yelled, and became so boisterous that Gray was almost fighting mad. He informed them that such proceedings must be stopped. "If yez do n't stop I 'll put out-of-doors every mother's son of ye. Go ahead and organize and stop this —— foolin'. I 'll have yez to understand that I 'm the high sheriff of Marshall county, and, by the devil's father, this court must be obeyed."

One of the old-timers of Marysville is the genial, warm-hearted Chas. F. Koester, who drifted "out west" from Atchison in the summer of 1859, where, as a boy of eighteen, he had been engaged in the restaurant and confectionery business.

For over four decades since leaving Atchison Mr. Koester has been a prominent resident of the Big Blue valley. When he first settled in that part of Kansas Territory, letters written from Marysville by correspondents crossing the plains and published in the *Champion* were headed by the editor "Far Western Correspondence." Marysville at that time was the extreme prominent frontier town of northern Kansas.

Mr. Koester settled in Marysville when the place boasted of only a score or two of houses, the most of which were plain, one-story structures. That was before the California pony express was dreamed of; likewise nearly two years before the first daily overland mail left St. Joseph and Atchison. When these enterprises were established they crossed the Blue river on a rope ferry

Home of Chas. F. Koester, Marysville, Kan.

The lawn — Koester home.

put in by the earliest settler, the late Gen. Frank J. Marshall. The Salt Lake mail-coach, drawn by four mules, at that time, passed through Marysville once a week from Atchison. The great outfitting ox and mule trains from Atchison, Leavenworth and St. Joseph, loaded for military posts on the plains and the various Rocky Mountain mining camps, also passed, making that point the most important on the overland route between the Missouri and the Rockies.

Mr. Koester can boast of having seen the old coaches of the Atchison and Salt Lake line, also those of the Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express, in 1859, the first California pony express, in April, 1860, and the first daily overland mail stage-coach, in July, 1861, all of which passed through his town. Waiting nearly twelve years, he witnessed the first railway passenger-train into Marysville from St. Joseph, in January, 1871.

CHAS. F. KOESTER.

Mr. Koester was born in Hesse-Cassel, Germany, in 1841, coming to America in 1850. Almost from the first the people of his city and county recognized his worth. To show their appreciation he has been kindly remembered. In two years after settling at Marysville he was first chosen register of deeds of Marshall county and for eight years filled that important office. He was next chosen county treasurer for two years and was then reelected. Besides, he has held a number of other positions of trust. He was one of a commission of three to revise the tax laws of Kansas.

In 1876 he was married, and the same year selected as one of the state commissioners to the Centennial Exposition, at Philadelphia. In 1882 he was elected to the responsible office of mayor of Marysville, a position he held several subsequent terms. He erected the first three-story brick building in Marysville, which still remains a prominent landmark. He also takes pride

Fountain in Chas. F. Koester's garden, Marysville, Kan. The overland stages, pony express and ox and mule wagon-trains passed over this ground in the '60's.

in the management of several well-improved farms near his home town. He has a comfortable residence, which, with its charming surroundings, is spoken of as one of the most inviting homes in Marshall county.

There are few people more generous and warm-hearted than Charles Koester. He is a man of honest, upright character, abhors trickery and deceit, and in looking over his long and useful life he may well feel proud of the position he has won in the esteem and confidence of honest men and the respect of all good citizens. Socially, he is a member of the Masonic fraternity, a member of Corinthian Commandery No. 40, K. T., and identified with the I. O. O. F. and the A. O. U. W. lodges, and, while he is one of the busiest men in Marysville, I have never seen him when he was too much engaged to sit down and talk with his friends. I used to meet him often and chat with him when I was employed on the overland stage line in 1863, four years after making his acquaintance. Scores of times have I met him since. When I first knew him, at Atchison, both of us were beardless boys. Since that time—I can hardly believe it—more than the average lifetime allotted man has passed.

For upwards of thirty years Mr. Koester has been identified with the banking business, and is the president of the Exchange

Bank of Schmidt & Koester, that was established by the late Frank Schmidt in April, 1870, and is the oldest bank in Marshall county. His long residence in the Big Blue valley has made the most of his life a busy one, and he finds pleasure and rest in attending to business.

Early in his married life the grim monster took from him a loving and affectionate wife, but he is surrounded and comforted at his household by a family of bright, intelligent and happy children—a son and two daughters. He has passed the half-century milestone; still he is vigorous and would easily pass for ten years younger than he really is. Long live my old and faithful friend Charles Koester, one of the truest and best men I ever knew on the overland route.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MISCELLANEOUS HAPPENINGS ON THE OVERLAND.

THE most lonesome night I ever passed was spent in a four-horse overland express vehicle on a trip across the plains, in the summer of 1863. Holladay had just purchased at the Concord manufactory three specially designed express wagons, and it was my ill luck to make the run in the first one sent out over the line. The driver and I had partaken of a late dinner at Kennekuk, twenty-four miles out, and the new vehicle was bowling along the road at a slow gait through the deep mud. Everything went smoothly until we reached Walnut creek, a tributary of Delaware river—then called the Grasshopper—one of the prominent streams flowing across the unsurpassed body of Indian land known as the Kickapoo reserve.

In attempting to cross the Walnut, late in the afternoon, the stage was suddenly stalled. A heavy rain having fallen a few hours before, the stream was greatly swollen and had overflowed its banks. We approached the stream, but I did not like the appearance of the situation. Lon Huff, the driver, after halting and surveying matters a short time, believed he could get across all right, in spite of the big volume of water. I felt that the situation was dangerous, but relied on his judgment, for he had been going over the road every day for a long time and knew every foot of it. He tried at the usual crossing, and, after driving into the bottom, near the east bed of the creek, to his great surprise he found that he could not go through. Stopping for a moment he likewise discovered that he could not turn around and go back. He was beaten; he appeared somewhat mortified, and at first could say nothing. The wheels had sunk to the hubs in the soft mud, and it was impossible, under the circumstances, for the four horses to move the heavily loaded vehicle. Repeated attempts showed that it was no use to try without more team.

Settlements along the overland route in the early '60's were few and far between. There were a number of Indian trails leading in different directions across the Indian reservation, with now and then along the stream a log cabin, occupied by Kickapoos. We were about thirty-five miles west of Atchison, and the stage was several hours late. The weather was cloudy, the atmosphere almost stifling with sultry heat, and it was past sundown. Darkness was rapidly approaching. There were no passengers on the stage this trip, but there was an unusually large number of express packages of various kinds. There were no farm houses in the vicinity, neither was there an ox or mule train in sight. The nearest station was several miles to the west, and Indian cabins and wigwams were scattering. A consultation was held. The driver looked at me and I risked "one eye" on him. The situation before us was anything but pleasing. He then suggested that I get down in the water and unhitch the horses while he would hold the team; but I intimated that I could hold the animals myself while he got down and unhitched. He understood the horses, he said, better than I did, and thought it important that he hold them. I could n't see it exactly in that light. I felt satisfied I was equal to the task of holding them, especially as it was impossible for the animals to move the heavily loaded vehicle an inch. I had a ride of over 600 miles to make, six days and nights, and did n't feel like wading in deep water just then. I finally impressed it upon him that it was plain that the only thing to be done, under the circumstances, was for him to get down into the water, which was almost waist deep, and unhitch the four horses. This he finally did; then quickly mounting upon one of the wheelers, he went with all four to the next station, several miles west, leaving the stage sticking in the mud and surrounded by water, and the messenger all by himself, outside on the driver's box.

It was uncertain when the driver would return, and when asked, he was unable to give any information on the subject. Should another big storm come up suddenly, thought I, possibly the stage, with its valuable treasure and messenger, might be swept away. The situation looked gloomy beyond description. I realized that my business, however—no matter what might turn up—was to "stay by the stuff," for the treasure and a big run of valuable promiscuous packages I had receipted for at the head office in Atchison, and they were in my care.

I was a rather timid young man, and this experience, it is no use to deny, was a trying one. Not long after dark I became sat-

STUCK ALL NIGHT IN WALNUT CREEK. *Page 558.*

isfied that the driver was playing a joke on me, and that he would not return until morning; that the express stage would not move out of the mud and water. Accordingly I went inside the vehicle and fortified myself. With my blankets and buffalo robe I made a good place to lie down, and retired. The long weary hours of that dark, dreary night, seemed like an age. The stream was still up, and the rushing torrent made plenty of music for a while; but, as the hours of night advanced, the waters slowly subsided, the sound ending in a gentle murmur.

I can't tell how I spent that dark, lonesome night, only I do know that I got very little sleep. Every little while I was disturbed. The occasional yelling of a band of drunken Kickapoo Indians returning from a periodical jamboree or powwow; the almost incessant howling of prairie wolves; the occasional barking of worthless Indian dogs; the frequent screeching of owls; the music of pollywogs and bullfrogs along the stream, and, worse than all, the swarms of bloodthirsty mosquitoes buzzing about my head for hours, were not conducive to rest. On the contrary, it was terribly trying on the nerves. Most of the sleep I managed to get that night was by keeping one eye open. As the hours kept slowly passing, I felt that there was more danger from highway robbers than there was from Indians and wolves. I spent the entire night in the uncomfortable position, and it appeared the longest and most trying night of my life.

It was between seven and eight o'clock the following morning when the driver returned, and I never was so glad to see a friend. He brought eight horses with him and an extra driver. Promptly hitching the animals to the stage-coach and getting on the box, he was not long in pulling the vehicle out of the mire. This to me was a great relief; and, four or five hours later, I ate three meals in one, at Smith's hotel, in Seneca, having fasted fully twenty-two hours, under conditions that I do not care to repeat.

History of the Old Concord Coach. All the coaches used on the overland line were made by the Abbot-Downing Company, of Concord, N. H., and, by all practical stage men, were pronounced the best vehicles of the kind in the world. This celebrated manufactory, having been established nearly ninety years and gained a world-wide reputation, is, without doubt, the oldest and largest establishment of the kind in the country. For staging purposes and general durability, as early as the first quarter of the present century, it was demonstrated that the old Concord coach had no equal. It has been gaining in popularity ever since. This favorite vehicle is now in daily use in many parts of the United States, Canada, and Mexico, and, singular as it may appear, it has found its way into every continent of the globe.

I can remember seeing these vehicles first when a little boy, and I well remember, way back in the early '40's, when a long string of them were in active service on the old turnpike between Ithaca and Catskill, in the State of New York. That was several years before the completion of the New York & Erie railroad. The arrival of the stage-coach at the various towns along that important turnpike line, even in those early days, more than half a century ago, was closely and regularly watched, and, at the time, attracted far more attention than do the lightning-express railway-trains at the present time.

The following advertisement will doubtless be read with interest by all who have at any time of their lives seen or ridden on the old Concord coach. It is copied from the *New Hampshire Patriot* of August 3, 1813:

> **LEWIS DOWNING**
>
> Respectfully informs the inhabitants of Concord and its vicinity, that he has commenced the
>
> **WHEEL WRIGHT BUSINESS**
>
> in Concord, near Mr. William Austin's store, where he flatters himself, that by strict and constant attention to business, and the correct and faithful manner in which his work will be executed, to merit the patronage of the public.
>
> N. B. Carriages of all kinds repaired on the shortest notice.
>
> Concord, Aug. 2, 1813.

Eighty-eight years have passed since this coach manufactory was started, and it has been in constant operation. Their coaches and hacks have been used on every important stage line between the Atlantic and the Pacific, and from the Great Lakes to the Gulf. During recent years they have shipped a number of their latest twelve-passenger coaches to Mexico, and, strange as it may appear, a number of the latest modern Concords have found their way into Africa.

The first overland mail line across the country from St. Louis to San Francisco, in 1858, was equipped with the celebrated coaches turned out at this well-known manufactory. So also was re line that carried the Great Salt Lake mail from the Missouri tver, in the early '50's. The first passenger vehicle of the kind tat ever made its way across the plains from the Missouri river c Denver and the Rocky Mountain mining camps was the Con- Ird coach, fifty-two of which were built for the Leavenworth & ike's Peak Express Company, which went into operation late a the spring of 1859. One of the first passengers to ride in it ross to the Rockies was Horace Greeley.

Next came the "Central Overland California," the first daily he, which was stocked with Concords, in the summer of 1861. his was succeeded by the "Overland Stage Line" in 1862. ree years later there was an opposition line, the Butterfield erland Despatch, which operated in Kansas and Colorado, on e Smoky Hill route, and which was also equipped with Con- rds. The same make of coaches was used later by the Holla- y Overland Mail and Express Company, across the plains, and, ll later, by the Wells, Fargo & Co. lines, reaching from the ssouri river all over the West and Northwest, which were sup- ed with Concords, running to various points in the mountain ns, following the completion and opening of the Union Pacific lway for through traffic, in 1869.

The coaches used on the Barlow & Sanderson lines throughout lorado and New Mexico, in the '70's and '80's, were made at Con- d, by the Abbot-Downing Company, as were those in use all r Kansas by the Kansas Stage Company.

The Abbot-Downing works, one of the greatest industries of ncord, cover about six acres of ground, and every part of the ch is made at these works. No similar establishment on the e of the globe can equal it in extent and importance.

Besides all the Concord rolling-stock Ben. Holladay acquired r becoming the successor of the Central Overland California Pike's Peak Express Company, in 1862, he received from Abbot-Downing Company, in 1864, twenty-nine passenger ches; in 1865, twelve; and in 1866, two. In April, 1868—ut a year before the great railroad overland was finished—re was shipped from these works to Wells, Fargo & Co., suc- sors of Holladay, at the terminus of the Union Pacific, in the ky Mountains, by special train from Concord to Omaha, in n days, forty of their nine-passenger coaches, in addition to r car-loads of repairs, and harness complete for the entire outfit.

The following business card (reduced in size) was issued by the company after the works had been in operation nearly three-quarters of a century:

ESTABLISHED 1813.
1813. EIGHTY-FOUR YEARS. 1897.
ABBOT-DOWNING COMPANY,
MANUFACTURERS OF
Coaches, Wagons, and Carriages.
EXPRESS AND HOSE WAGONS A SPECIALTY.
CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE.
——OFFICES.——
92 OLIVER ST., BOSTON, MASS. 130 WEST 30th ST., NEW YORK CITY.
GERALD WYMAN, TREAS. L. DOWNING, JR., PRES'T.
BOSTON. CONCORD.

A Prairie Fire. During my boyhood days I had occasionally read of Davy Crockett, as I also had of a number of other frontier pioneer Western hunters and trappers. I had observed in the books on this subject some sort of a scene showing an illustration of a prairie on fire. In the description of nearly every such picture, however, with a herd of buffalo in the distance, it would appear that at least a few of the frontier celebrities spoken of in some manner always figured prominently in the scene.

I well remember seeing a picture of a prairie fire more than a half-century ago, when a noted hunter with a buffalo steak on the point of his hunting-knife, on a run, followed up the blaze, and broiled the steak equal to a first-class cook. Quite naturally I often longed, before reaching my teens, to see, in the far West, a real prairie on fire. My curiosity in this respect was not gratified, however, until my second day on Kansas soil, while riding through the Delaware Indian reserve in a spring wagon, with a Tennessee farmer. The trip was across the prairies from Leavenworth to Lawrence, on the 22d of April, 1857.

For miles I had gazed upon and greatly admired the beautiful, gently rolling, natural meadows. When within a dozen miles of Lawrence, I jumped out of the wagon, struck a match, lighted the tall prairie-grass, and then watched the flames as they rolled high above, while we sped towards our destination in the opposite direction. The Tennesseean then told me that there was a stringent law against setting fire to prairie-grass in Kansas, and that, if the fire resulted in damage to the property of the Delaware Indians, the Government might make it warm for me, if it learned that I was the party who caused the damage.

The wind blew a stiff breeze from the west, the flames rolled skyward, and for miles I could look back and see the black clouds of smoke that arose from the fire. I was then a boy, not quite out of my teens. It is perhaps unnecessary to say that I was considerably frightened, fearing that the flames might wipe out some of the Indian wigwams, and, possibly, do other damage to them. I felt uneasy during the balance of that trip, but at the same time tried to keep a "stiff upper lip." It was considerable of a relief to me, however, when we were in sight of Lawrence, and I breathed much easier after we drove onto the rope ferry-boat and had crossed the Kansas river and gone up into the historic city. The ferry was operated by a couple of Indians.

Hundreds of times since then have I seen prairie fires in Kansas, but I was careful not to start any of them myself. I shall never forget one that I saw while in southern Nebraska, coming down the Little Blue river, on the overland stage-coach, during the fall of 1863. It was near midnight. We were riding at a gait of about six or eight miles an hour, when we caught up with a prairie fire that we had been watching for some time, and which was sweeping across the country a short distance ahead of us. The night appeared almost as dark as ink, by contrast, and the wind was blowing a lively breeze from the northwest, thus sweeping in the direction we were traveling, but, as the fire was ahead of us, we felt little danger. It would have been a race for dear life had such a wind not been at our backs.

The prairie-grass was tall and dry, and there was at intervals a rank growth of dry weeds. The fierce flames, fanned by the strong breeze, leaped high above the ground ahead of us and presented a grand and beautiful spectacle, which, on that dark, weird night, looked awful in its grandeur. The heavens and all surrounding objects were brilliantly lighted up, hundreds of thousands of acres of wild prairie were burned over along the valley, and not until we reached a bluff on the north bank of the river, where the fierce flames had leaped to the opposite side of the stream, did we lose sight of the brilliant spectacle which we had for several

A BEAUTIFUL NIGHT SCENE IN THE LITTLE BLUE VALLEY. *Page 544.*

—35

miles been following closely. The reality of the prairie fire was more impressive than the pictures I had obtained from descriptions read in my schoolboy days in New York and Pennsylvania, at which time I had no dream of seeing the flashing flames in their native strength.

In an autumn of the early '70's I encountered a prairie fire in the Republican valley. I was in a buggy with a friend, going down the river along its east bank, and it was several years before the Union Pacific road had built its branch up the valley. It was late in the afternoon and the weather was warm, it being Indian summer. We were moving along leisurely, when suddenly there was a change of the wind. From the south it had shifted apparently in almost a twinkling to the northwest and began to blow furiously. Along the road was a rank growth of tall, dry grass, while the sunflowers were so tall they reached above team and buggy. Soon we were startled by smoke, and could hear the crackling of sunflower stalks. Pausing for a moment, we discovered a fierce prairie fire was pushing toward us. The smoke increased in volume and the heat soon became intense. Our team was a span of Mexican mustangs, noted for their endurance, and the animals were pushed to their utmost speed. Steadily the velocity of the wind appeared to increase, and the fierce flames, fanned by the zephyrs, rose high in the air and leaped a considerable distance. We appeared to be almost surrounded by the fire at times, and realized at once it was now a race for life. In some places the road was sort of zigzag, but the team did not mind this and fairly flew. At times the smoke was almost suffocating and the heat seemed unbearable. We did n't know what to do; we hardly had time to think; but we quickly realized that we could n't stop, even for a moment, but must keep going. No race down the Republican valley was ever more exciting, we knowing it could be limited on our part only by the speed and endurance of our ponies.

At one time we thought we were victims, and that our only hope was in abandoning buggy and team and fleeing to the bank of the river and jumping into the water. Just then there was an abrupt change in the road and we felt a little easier. But in a little while the flames were again almost at our backs. Taking a second thought, it seemed a hazardous undertaking, an impossibility, to stop long enough to leap into the river or do anything else, with the flames so close; so we remained in the buggy, trusting to the fleetness of our nags in getting us out to a place of safety. It was a section of country that neither of us knew anything about. We were total strangers in that part of Kansas. For miles there was not a house visible or any other sign of improvement; still we realized that, if not overtaken and enveloped by the devouring flames, sooner or later we would be "out of the wilderness." It was evident to us that our only hope was to keep the animals on a run. This we did for six miles, when, finally, we suddenly emerged from the rank vegetation and were able to give a sigh of relief. We thanked God that we were safe. Soon we were in sight of a settlement and near quite a body of timber, and here the great fire had finished its race with us, coming out a close second.

A Funeral on the Plains. In the afternoon of May 3, 1864, there died, at Latham station, Colorado, a young man just out of his teens, named Gustavus R. Hackley, from Kalamazoo, Mich. In company with his brother, who was two years his senior, he had come by railroad to Atchison, where an outfit was purchased; and from there they drove across the country in a spring wagon. The two were bound for the land of gold and silver, in the Rockies beyond Denver. They had arrived two or three days before, but, owing to the sudden illness of Gustavus, a halt was made at the station, in the hope that a few days of rest might possibly restore the sick one so he could continue his overland journey.

There was no extra bed at the station; so the stock tender, a kind-hearted man named Armstrong, who had a bunk on the first floor, freely gave up his bed to the sick man, though a stranger. This kind act was greatly appreciated by both the sick man and his brother; but all that could be done for the unfortunate, who, by the way, received every attention possible, failed to restore him. From the first he steadily grew worse, and was delirious at times and sank rapidly, until death came after two or three days' suffering.

A man by the name of Plowhead, living on a ranch a few miles away on the north side of the Platte river—a Swede by birth—who happened to be at the station and knew something about cabinet-making, was secured to make a coffin. It was arranged that the funeral should take place the next day, late in the afternoon. At the station were three ladies: Mrs. W. S. McIlvain, the station agent's wife, Mrs. B. F. Houx, of Nodaway county, Missouri, and Miss Lizzie Trout, who was head cook and had charge of the dining-room. Besides the station keeper and myself, there was Armstrong (the stock tender), and his assistant, Plowhead (the undertaker), and four stage-drivers. I was the youngest one in the crowd, excepting Charley McIlvain, the ten-year-old son of the agent.

The hour set for the funeral was rapidly drawing nigh, and every person appeared to be waiting, or rather expecting that the other fellow would take charge and be master of ceremonies on this solemn occasion. All thought McIlvain, the man of the house, and the oldest person about the premises, the best fitted of all for this duty, and, under the circumstances, the proper one to take charge and administer the last sad rites; but neither he nor any one else at the station appeared to have the nerve to take upon himself such a solemn task.

What was to be done? This was the all-important question. The matter must be decided at once. It was suggested that a vote be taken, as a means of compromise. This was perfectly satisfactory to all. I at once nominated McIlvain and the motion was promptly seconded; but McIlvain then nominated me; yet, as no one seconded his motion, he "exercised a prerogative" and seconded it himself. The vote was by ballot, and I thought everything was going along all right; but when the counting was done I realized at once that a "grave" joke had been played on me. The only ballot that appeared for McIlvain I cast myself; but my feelings can better be imagined than described when I discovered that all the rest of the ballots were for me. I felt like charging them with being "border ruffians" and that there had been "fraud at the ballot-box."

To say that I was perfectly thunderstruck—fairly dumbfounded—but mildly expressed my feelings on that occasion. I tried to get out of it by insisting that I had no license to perform such a task. But that dodge would n't work. Finally I braced up and somewhat reluctantly decided to take charge, much as I regretted it, and do the best I could, since there was no one else about the premises who would take upon himself any such responsibility. The ladies could all sing hymns and some of the stage men could sing a little; but not one of them considered himself equal to the task of performing the solemn duties of a full-fledged parson on such an occasion.

My Bible was fished out from the bottom of my trunk, and, everything else being arranged, I opened services by reading a few passages from the Scriptures, after which I called on the "brethren" and "sisters," who had the matter arranged, and sang an appropriate hymn. Every one at the station had turned out to the funeral. The exercises at the station were brief, and, when concluded, I then led the way to the grave, which had been dug on the brow of a terrace perhaps 300 yards east of the station, an appropriate spot near the overland-stage road, from which could be seen Long's Peak and at least 100 miles of the summit of the Rockies. At my suggestion, the stage-drivers, with the others employed at the station, acted as pall-bearers.

Slowly we all marched out to the grave and stood with uncovered heads around it. What to do then I did n't know. I realized instantly that I was no more fitted to conduct a funeral than a blind man is to teach astronomy. But I was in for it, and no time must be lost. Accordingly I made a few remarks as appropriate to the occasion as could be expected of "one of my age"; then the last solemn exercises were performed. The young man and brother, the only solitary mourner, more than a thousand miles from home and loved ones, was an object of pity. All there assembled around the last resting-place of the departed could not but sympathize and feel sorry for the young man, who, after getting within two days' drive of Denver, had just lost a devoted brother and companion.

After the young man had left for Denver, the next morning, it seemed that I, for a time, was "the observed of all observers." One of the drivers suggested that I "had missed my calling"; that I "ought to have been a preacher." McIlvain, who had "played it on me," insisted that no preacher living could have put on such a sanctimonious and dignified countenance as that I had presented during the solemn ceremonies the afternoon before. Another paid me a compliment by saying that I had made a "No. 1 parson." I do n't know what I should or could have done under any other circumstances. No money could have hired me to do what I did; but as I had freely conversed with the dead young man's brother a dozen times or more, what else could I have done? Somehow I felt that it was my duty, when every other person at the station had positively refused to shoulder the responsibility, to take upon myself the task—unpleasant though it appeared at the time—of conducting the first and only funeral I ever witnessed on the plains.

Bitter Creek. Beadle, who crossed the plains in the '60's and made an extensive tour of the northwest territories, made a considerable of the distance as a mule whacker. In going over the Rockies he went through the Bitter Creek country, a region that everybody despised, and, speaking of it in his book, "The Undeveloped West," says:

> "For sixty miles on Bitter creek, Wyoming, the soil is a mass of clay or sand and alkali—a horrible and irreclaimable desert, which has made the place a byword. For a few days our average elevation was 7000 feet above sea-level and the nights were extremely cold. On the 22d we reached Bridger's Pass, and next day entered on the Bitter Creek region—horror of overland teamsters—where all possible ills of western travel are united. At daybreak we rose, stiff with cold, to catch the only temperate hour there was for driving; but by nine A. M. the heat was most exhausting. The road was worked up into a bed of blinding white dust by the laborers on the railroad grade, and a gray mist of ash and earthy powder hung over the valley, which obscured the sun but did not lessen its heat. At intervals the 'Twenty-mile Desert,' the 'Red-sand Desert' and the 'White Desert' crossed our way, presenting beds of sand and soda, through which the half-choked men and animals toiled and struggled, in a dry air and under a scorching sun.
>
> "In vain the yells and curses of the teamsters doubled and redoubled, blasphemies that one might expect to inspire a mule with diabolical strength; in vain the fearful 'blacksnake' curled and popped over the animals' backs, sometimes gashing the skin, and sometimes raising welts the size of one's finger. For a few rods they would struggle on, dragging the heavy load through the clogging banks, and then stop, exhausted, sinking to their knees in the hot and ashy heaps. Then two of us would unite our teams and, with the help of all the rest, drag through to the next solid piece of ground, where for a few hundred yards the wind had removed the loose sand and soda and left bare the flinty and gravelly subsoil. Thus, by most exhausting labor, we accomplished ten or twelve miles a day. Half an hour or more of temperate coolness then gave us respite till soon after sundown, when the cold wind came down, as if in heavy volume, from the Snowy Range, and tropic heat was succeeded by arctic cold with amazing suddenness. On the 27th of August one of my mules fell twice, exhausted from the heat; that night ice formed in our buckets as thick as a pane of glass."

The Bitter Creek country, for a distance of nearly 100 miles, was one of the most-despised regions on the "Overland" between the eastern and western slopes of the Rockies. All the drivers

HOLDING UP A TREASURE COACH IN THE BITTER CREEK COUNTRY.

who knew anything about that section of the route spoke of it in anything but pleasant words. An amusing incident happened in the later years of staging across the Rockies, while the Pacific railroad was being pushed in both directions. The stage was doing an immense business carrying passengers from the western terminus of the Union Pacific to the eastern terminus of the Central Pacific. A young Eastern college graduate happened to be a passenger on his first trip across the continent, but on account of an accident had to spend a night in this region, at a spot where he chanced to camp with a party of teamsters. Some time afterward he gave his experiences to the Boston *Home Journal*, as follows:

"The stage broke down on Bitter creek, and the passengers had to walk to the next station. I grew tired of walking before I reached the station, and, coming late in the afternoon to where some teamsters were camped, I concluded to stop with them for the night.

"There were four teamsters and as many wagons, while thirty-two oxen grazed around in the vicinity. In my thoughts I pitied them on account of the hard life they led, and spoke to them in a kind tone, and endeavored to make my conversation instructive. I plucked a flower, and, pulling it to pieces, mentioned the names of the parts—pistil, stamens, calyx, and so on—and remarked that it must be indigenous to the locality and spoke of the plant being endogenous, in contradistinction to exogenous, and that they could see that it was not cryptogamus. In looking at some fragments of rocks, my thoughts wandered off into geology, and I spoke of the Tertiary and Carboniferous periods, and of the pterodactyl, ichthyosaurus, and dinotherium.

"The teamsters looked at me, then at each other, but made no response. We squatted down around the frying-pan to take supper, and, as the big fellow with his right hand slapped or sort of larruped a long piece of fried bacon over a piece of bread in his left hand, sending a drop of hot grease into my left eye, he said to the one-eyed man: 'Bill, is my Shakespeare in yo' wagon? I missed it to-day.'

"'No; my Tennyson and volume of Italian poets is in thar—no Shakespeare.'

"The lank-looking teamster, biting off a piece of bread about the size of a saucer, said to the big man, in a voice which came huskily through the bread: 'Jake, did yer ever read that volum' of po'ms that I writ?'

"'Yer means "Musin's of an Idle Man"?' spoke up the red-headed man, addressing the poet.

"'Yes.'

"'Hev read every line in it a dozen times,' said the teamster with the red hair, and, as he sopped a four-inch swath with a piece of bread across the frying-pan, he repeated some lines.

"'Them 's they,' nodded the poet. 'The emp'ror of Austry writ me a letter highly complimentin' them po'ms.'

"'They 're very techin',' added the wiry man.

"I took no part in these remarks. Somehow I did not feel like joining in.

"The wiry man, having somewhat satisfied his appetite, rolled up a piece of bacon rind into a sort of single-barreled opera-glass, and began to squint through it toward the northern horizon.

"'What yer doin', Dave?' asked the stout man.

"'Takin' observations on the north star. Want to make some astronomical calkilations when I git into Sacramenter.'

"'Well, yer need n't ter make that tel'scope. I could er took observation for you, as I hain't but one eye.'

"'Git out dar, you durned old Carboniferous pterodactyl,' yelled the hame-jawed driver to an ox that was licking a piece of bacon.

"'I give a good deal of my time to 'stronimy when I was in Yoorup,' remarked the tall man.

"'Over thar long?' asked one.

"'Good while; was minister to Rooshy. Then I spent some time down to Rome.'

"'Rome!' exclaimed the lank individual; 'was born there. My father was a sculptor.'

"'Well, one would n't er thought it, to look at yer.'

"'I never was in Yoorup,' remarked the one-eyed man. 'When I occupied the cheer of ancient languages at Harvard College my health failed, and the feller that had me hired wanted me to go ter Yoorup for an out, but I concluded to come west, ter look—hold up thar, yer infernal old flea-bitten ichyceverus,' he bawled to an ox that was chewing a cud.

"I felt hot and feverish and a long way from home.

"'I got ready once ter go to Rome—wanted to complete my studies—but give it up,' said the one they called Dave.

"'What fur?'

"'They wanted me to run for guv'ner in Virginny.'

"'Yer beat 'em?'

"'Thunder, yes.'

"'Why did n't yer stay thar?'

"'Well, when my job as guv'ner gave out they 'lected me 'Piscopal bishop, an' I hurt my lungs preachin'. Come west for my lungs.'

"'Found 'em?'

"'Well, I 'm improvin'.'

"I did not rest well that night. As day came on, and the men began to turn over in their blankets and yawn, the tall one said: 'Hello, Bill. How yer makin' it?'

"'Oh, I 'm indigenous.'

"'An' Dave?'

"'I 'm endogenous.'

"'An' you, lanky, yer son of a sculptor?'

"'Exogenous.'

"'How you feel, Jake?' inquired one of the three.

"'Cryptogamous, sir; cryptogamous.'

"I walked out a few steps to a little stream to get a drink. I felt thirsty and I ached. Then I heard a voice from the blankets: 'Wonder if those durned old dinother'uns of ourn are done grazin'?'

"Then a reply: 'I guess they 've got to the Tertiary period.'

"I walked a little piece to breathe the morning air. I kept on."

Rough Experiences. Ab. Williamson, in the early days of Colorado staging, was quite a noted "knight of the lines." He drove north from Denver to Church's, Middle Boulder, and St. Vrain's, where Longmont is built. Ab. had a rough time on this route in January, 1865. He was caught in one of the worst storms ever encountered in that section. He pulled out from Middle Boulder at four o'clock, about the time a brisk snow had begun to fall. In a little while there was nothing of the trail visible, as could easily be observed by the jolting of the stage as the wheels passed over the rough surface of the ground. The place was about ten miles from Longmont. Years afterward Ab. delighted to tell of some of the experiences of that night and the following two days, before they found their bearings. In and on the coach were a lieutenant from Fort Laramie; a merchant, with his 18-year-old daughter, from Atchison; two miners; the express messenger; and an agent of the stage company, from Denver, on his way north to buy mules for the line. The team was stopped, and the genial driver got down off the box and, opening the coach door, proclaimed in cheerful tones that they were lost, and might as well know it.

It was Ab.'s custom to carry under the seat a good-sized bottle, and this he placed at the disposal of the male occupants of the stage, took off his horses, and, after making them as comfortable as he could under the circumstances, by invitation took up his quarters among the passengers on the inside. All night the snow continued to fall and the wind to blow. In the morning all that could be seen were the sides of a snowy embankment worn into hollows by the breath of the dejected-looking horses. The storm continued and there was no way out. For another night and a day they stayed there. During all this time the young woman, under these terribly trying circumstances, proved the most cheerful one of the party, entertaining every one by a frequent repetition of all the songs she knew. All the hymns the party knew were sung and repeated, interspersed with a number of patriotic and lively comic songs. There was not much formality at eating, for the scanty contributions to the cupboard were

Ab.'s lunch and a few sandwiches which the daughter had secured at the last station, fearing her father might be overcome with faintness. When the storm subsided, the two miners, in company with the lieutenant, started out in the snow, waist deep, to organize a relief expedition from the interior. They were out for hours, finally getting a sight of St. Vrain's, where they repaired, and secured a posse to dig the stage-coach out; and some time after nightfall of the third day the little party had been rescued, and were calling for round after round of the battery steak served in the cozy interior of St. Vrain's station.

In the summer of 1865 the Indians were very bad, especially on the stage road between Denver and Salt Lake. A number of raids were made, and traffic by stage and wagon-trains was seriously interrupted. So great was the terror the redskins created that often only well-armed, brave and stout-hearted men had the courage to go out and face the hideous yell which invariably went with the red fiends as they swooped down upon wagon-trains, emigrant outfits, and trains of stage-coaches with the mails and passengers.

Bob Spotswood and Jim Stewart, division agents, respectively, on the North Platte and Bitter Creek stretches, were prominent among the most-experienced men on the line. They promptly came to the front as "the bold and reckless navigators of the fleets of mountain corvettes that sailed through the stormy seas of blind Indian warfare." The troubles on these two divisions lasted nearly four years, and both Spotswood and Stewart had abundant opportunities to develop into first-class Indian fighters. It was Holladay's intention to run his stages in spite of the savages, and, with these fearless agents, he came pretty near doing it. Spotswood's headquarters were at Virginia Dale, where the trouble began when a body of Indians swooped down, their intention being to burn the station and outbuildings and get away with the stage stock. In this cleverly planned game they were stood off, but returned in overwhelming numbers, and succeeded in reducing to a charred heap all the stations between Virginia Dale and the Bitter Creek headquarters. The Indians were so cunning that usually they would have all the mischief done before the stage men could mount their horses and go in pursuit.

To be more successful in fighting their way across with the mails, the two superintendents conceived a plan which, while it did not protect them from attack, still made victory rather difficult for the savages. Each allowed seven days' mail to accumulate at the headquarters of his division; the passenger travel, owing to the troubles, being very light. An escort of ten to fifteen cavalrymen, supplied from Fort Collins, went along, and, with this retinue, the seven coaches, and ten or a dozen men about the station, the two trains, west- and east-bound, would forge along towards each other and meet midway. Among the prominent drivers of the coaches were Jim Enos, Bill Opdyke, Jake Hawk, Hank Brown, and several others, all more or less skilled in the "art" of fighting Indians. When everything went smoothly, it would only take a short time to exchange the mail and a few frightened passengers; then the teams and coaches would be turned back. Strange as it may seem, all the traveling in this way was done at night, as it is a custom of the Indians seldom to fight except in the daytime. For over 200 miles all the stations were abandoned, and the stage men congregated for these expeditions at Virginia Dale and Sulphur Springs.

Spotswood was in a fight with Indians one time on his North Platte division. His caravan having been taken by storm, as soon as he could he got the vehicles in as close order as he could under the harassing flight of arrows, and he and his men fell back, to lay in on Little Laramie. The stage-coaches were brought around on the double quick into the barricade, to which these brave men were accustomed. Hostilities began early in the morning, and it was evening when the redskins drew off. The fight was a bitter one and few of the men engaged in it came out without being hit. Two were stretched out; one, Alex. Hardy, a hostler, dead, and Jim Enos, the noted hunter at Virginia Dale, with an Arapahoe arrow protruding from his abdomen. The dying man was carried up to Cooper Creek station, where stood an old blacksmith shop. Accompanying the party was a surgeon, who, being unable to pull out the arrow by hand, found it necessary to use a pair of the blacksmith's tongs. In an instant after the arrow left the wound there was a single convulsion and poor Enos was dead. The party carried his body sorrowfully back to Virginia Dale for burial. Enos for a long time had been a great favorite with all the stage boys. Besides being an old driver he was a noted hunter and trapper, and was kept busy in supplying the station with fresh game. His hunting-ground extended for a distance of about seventy-five miles—mostly from Virginia Dale west to Cooper Creek, and the overland stage passengers and employees enjoyed many a good venison steak and roast brought down by him. On the North Platte there was a famous hunter named Al. Houston, and the two were warm friends. Such game as antelope, blacktail deer, elk and bear were the varieties of wild fresh meat brought in by these intrepid hunters.

As the Indian excitement began gradually to die out, the stage men were meeting with new and often more dangerous enemies. The cry of "Hold up your hands!" with the muzzle of a death-dealing gun in the hands of the road-agent, pointing in your face, was something not pleasant to look at. Few passengers ever went over the stage road by the primitive Concord coach without realizing now and then the terrible consciousness that their lives were at the mercy of a party of cutthroat desperadoes, who apparently valued life as nothing, but who worked with less noise and more tact than the prowling redskin scalpers. It was on the Bitter Creek division that a most phenomenal robbery occurred, following the relentless and bloody raids of the Indians. The stage carrying the express was held up for no less a sum than $60,000. That and often larger amounts were carried across the Rockies on a single coach. On a regular express coach, it was customary to have the safe securely fastened on the inside, in the front end of the vehicle; but where passenger coaches were used in carrying the express, the treasure box (made of strong sole leather and iron-bound) was placed in the front boot, under the driver's box, and chained down. Without the slightest warning, five road-agents appeared from the sage-brush near the headquarters of Bitter Creek and called a halt. There was a single passenger on the stage, besides the division blacksmith; hence resistance was useless. The masked robbers at once tore loose the box, carried it off into the brush, and broke it open. One of the robbers driver Edam noticed particularly, whom, from the build and carriage, he felt satisfied was a woman.

At the time of this hold-up Stewart and Spotswood were at Fort Steele, but Edam telegraphed as soon as he reached a station, advising them of the facts, and urging them to come at once to the scene of the robbery. The two superintendents organized a small force, which struck the trail; but, unfortunately for them, the fugitives had gone over the lava rock; therefore further search was useless, and the pursuing party was forced to return. Two years afterward "Broncho Jack," a noted California stage-robber, was arrested in Texas, and taken back to California for a number of crimes, and, when given a life sentence, confessed to having taken part in the stage robbery at Bitter Creek, when such a vast amount was secured. Another robber, who went by the name of Jack Hughes, was also implicated in this hold-up, and the following year was killed in a stage-coach by a deputy-sheriff, after refusing to surrender.

Bob Spotswood was a somewhat noted character on the "Overland." I knew him first in 1860, when he was whacking oxen and mules across the plains with wagon freight-trains. He went into the employ of the overland stage line as messenger from Atchison to Denver in 1862; and was afterwards promoted to division agent between Denver and Julesburg, and, later, on the Salt Lake road from Latham and Denver northwest, known as the North Platte division. He was engaged several years on the great overland line, and was one of its most capable and efficient men. After the railroad had put an end to staging across the continent, Spotswood and W. C. McClelland went to staging on their own hook. They ran several lines into the mountains and made a good deal of money. The Denver & Rio Grande and the Denver & South Park railways were afterwards built, and penetrated every mining camp in the state, and this long since put an end to the old-time Concord stage routes.

There were a great many bad characters in the vicinity of Bitter Creek, and scattered along the region were some thieves and robbers who had been guilty of other high crimes. When the drivers, stock tenders and division agents from other portions of the stage line had occasion to speak of a fellow they despised, they would usually allude to him as "a 'son of a gun' from Bitter Creek"; often their remarks were in language not so chaste, but yet decidedly more forcible.

Ben. Holladay's "Hold-up." A great many interesting episodes, occasionally some of them laughable, happened on the overland line; and hairbreadth escapes were, in the later years of staging across the plains, of frequent occurrence. While nearly every one was apparently on the lookout, still no one could tell but that the very next time he might be the victim. The ma-

"Keep your hands still and I'll scratch it for you." *Page 560.*

rauders, in almost every instance, unlike the Indians, were after valuables instead of human scalps. However, they were no respecters of persons, but would rob indiscriminately. They did not even spare Ben. Holladay, the proprietor of the great stage line, who they knew was rolling in wealth, and he was caught at a time when he least expected it. Upon being interviewed by a New York reporter after he had returned from an overland trip, Mr. Holladay said:

"One night I was bouncing over the plains in one of my overland coaches. Mrs. Holladay and myself were the only passengers. Several stages had been robbed within two months, and the driver was ripping along as though a gang of prairie wolves were after him. Suddenly the horses were thrown on their haunches and the stage stopped. I was heaved forward, but quickly recovered, and found myself gazing at the muzzles of a double-barreled shot-gun.

"'Throw up your hands and don't stir!' shouted the owner, in a gruff voice.

"Up went my hands, and I began to commune with myself. The fellow then coolly asked for my money. I saw that he did not know who I was, and I was afraid that my sick wife might awake and call my name. My coat was buttoned over my bosom, but scarcely high enough to hide a magnificent emerald that cost me over $8000 a few weeks before in San Francisco.

I scarcely breathed through fear that light might strike the stone, and its sparkling brilliancy attract the attention of the robber. I had about $40,000 in a money belt and several hundred dollars in my pockets.

"Suddenly my friend shouted: 'Come, shell out quick, or I 'll send the old 'un a free lunch.' I passed out the few hundreds loose in my pockets and handed him my gold watch and chain. They were heavy. I think the chain alone would weigh five pounds at least.

"'There,' said I, 'there 's every cent I 've got! Take it and let me go. My wife is very ill, and I do n't know what would happen to her if she knew what was going on.'

"'Keep your hands up!' was the reply, while a second robber received my watch and money.

"Then a search was made for the express company's box, but the double-barreled shot-gun did not move. It's muzzles were within a foot of my nose. For my life I did not dare to stir. My nose began to itch. The stiff hairs of my mustache got up, one after another, and tickled it, until the sensation was intolerable. I could stand it no longer.

"'Stranger,' I said, 'I must scratch my nose! It itches so that I am almost crazy!'

"'Move your hands,' he shouted, 'and I 'll blow a hole through your head big enough for a jack-rabbit to jump through!'

"I appealed once more. 'Well,' he answered, 'keep your hands still and I 'll scratch it for you.'"

"Did he scratch it?" asked one of Ben.'s interested listeners.

"Sure," said Mr. Holladay.

"How?" asked the breathless listener.

"With the muzzle of the cocked gun," said the great overlander. "He rubbed the muzzle around my mustache and raked it over the end of my nose, until I thanked him and said that it itched no longer.

"The robbers soon afterwards took their leave, with many apologies, and I continued my journey to the Missouri river, with the big emerald and $40,000."

An Honest German Farmer's Loss. In the fall of 1864, while returning to Atchison from a trip to Denver by stage, an ox train of seventy-five or eighty loaded wagons bound for the mountains was met, stuck in the mud, a few miles east of the Kickapoo Indian reservation. The train was from Leavenworth, and, having been caught in a protracted rain, had become stalled, on the old military road between Atchison and Kennekuk. The wheels had sunk to the hubs in the mud, and even with the four or five yoke of cattle to each vehicle it was impossible for the beasts to pull them out. All that could be done under the circumstances was to unyoke the cattle and turn them loose. This was done, and the place where it happened was near a corn-field belonging to an honest German farmer. The cattle had had a hard day's haul and were hungry; they evidently knew a good thing, however, when they saw it; for as soon as they were unyoked and let loose they made a mad rush, broke down the farmer's fence, and took up quarters in the corn-field. All attempts to drive the hungry animals out proved useless. They not only stayed there all night, but, for the next forty-eight hours or more, used the field for a corral. In all there were between 500 and 600 head of oxen, but neither the farmer nor the drivers could do anything with them.

The farmer naturally protested, in broken English, more forcible than elegant, but that did n't get the cattle out of the corn-field. He finally withdrew, consulted some of his neighborhood friends, and, after making a careful examination, they estimated that the cattle had injured him to the amount of $250.

He then called on the wagon boss and said: "You owes me $250. Your oxen eats up mine corn-field and me damaged dot much; I vants mine pay."

"All right," said the wagon boss; "I am going to Leavenworth on the first stage and will report the facts to headquarters."

The train boss left, but returned the following day, bringing the pleasing information that the owner of the train would be up the next day and settle. He came, and the German was promptly on hand to meet him.

"Good morning," said the owner of the train. "I notice that my cattle have not been lacking for something good to eat the past three days."

"Dot ish so," said the German, "and you owes me $250," he said, as he handed his bill to the freighter.

"All right," said the owner of the cattle as he pulled out one $50 and two crisp $100 greenbacks, telling the farmer to receipt the bill, which was promptly done. The freighter politely thanked the honest German because his corn-field was so close by and that the account was so reasonable, adding: "If you had made the bill $500 I would have paid it just as quickly, and thought, under the circumstances, I was getting out of the dilemma extremely easy. Good day, sir."

"Good day," said the German, "but I vants to say, mister, dot I 'm one tam Dutch fool. I now see I 've lost $250 by mine ignorance. I vish some one vould kick me."

The freighter went to his train, and the honest farmer started

AN HONEST GERMAN FARMER LOSES $250. *Page 561.*

to the house with his $250; but nearly every step of the way he made the air blue with his German-English maledictions, as he hurried to report to his frau. She was equally interested with her husband in knowing that his bill of $250 was so promptly paid. She saw him coming and met him at the gate. He had the money in his hand, and, shaking it before her eyes, said: "Katarina, did you know dot I ish von tam Dutch fool? I vants you to kick me off this blace. I lose $250; dot man tell me he pay $500 shoost so quick as he pay $250. Eef I been a Yankee I 'd been a rich man instead of being a poor tam Dutch fool. Kick me, Katarina, for not being a Yankee. I feel shoost like I take the gun and shoots the top of mine head off. Such tam foolishness make me sick; $250 lost shoost because I vas one honest man. All I know now ish dot I vas one tam Dutch fool."

Whisky Run Mail Robbery. The only robbery or loss of Government and stage property sustained by me during all my overland experience was on one of my return trips from Denver to Atchison. The robbery occurred in November, 1864, late one night, at a small stream called Whisky Run (near Grayson's station), about 150 miles west of Atchison. That night, as usual, I was riding on the box alongside the driver, and inside the coach were a half-dozen or more passengers. One of the straps on the hind boot was by some one unbuckled and a sack of way-mail pulled out, but the theft was not discovered until the stage had reached the company's office at Atchison, when it was found that there was a sack missing. A couple of days later a letter came to me from Ray Grayson (keeper of the station bearing his name), that he had discovered on the prairie, in a ravine some rods from the station, a mail-bag with the strap cut, and scores of letters and papers torn open and lying loose on the ground, which he had carefully gathered up, placed in the bag and all were taken to the station.

I made preparations at once, and took the first coach westward from Atchison to the scene of the robbery. I spent a day there at the station getting what I could of the mutilated contents in a condition to forward to their destination, noting on each letter the fact that the mail had been robbed, as already explained. All the letters that could be were sent forward as directed, but the most of it was in such condition that I was obliged to send it, with a letter of explanation, direct to the dead-letter office. I never felt more mortified than over this robbery, especially as it had occurred while I was on the same coach.

It is quite natural, however, that I should also feel some pride in the fact of my connection with the first great daily overland mail; for, while engaged with "Uncle Sam" in the post-office at Atchison and on the plains, during that eventful period from the spring of 1861 to the spring of 1865, I personally handled not less than 10,820 sacks of this mail, with the loss of only one sack, and that was recovered, as above stated, inside of four days.

The division agent sent in the following letter:

"BIG SANDY, NEB., December 10, 1864.

"*W. A. Gillespie, Agent Overland Stage Line, Atchison, Kan.:*

"DEAR SIR—I think I have got a clue to the mail robbery that took place at Whisky Run. The robber is a man that G. G. Wheeler receipted for from Rock Creek to Atchison on the 17th or 18th of November. He gave his name as J. C. Read, of Omaha. I engaged George Hulbert to go to Atchison to give Frank Root the description of the man, as he had taken full description of the place. Yours truly,

SAM'L O. JEROME, *Div. Agt.*"

Concerning the robbery of the mail near Grayson's, I at once reported all the facts known to the department, both by letter and wire, and in due time received the following:

"POST-OFFICE DEPARTMENT,
(CONTRACT OFFICE—INSPECTION DIVISION,)
WASHINGTON, December 24, 1864.

"*Frank A. Root, Esq., Mail Agent, Atchison, Kan.:*

"SIR—Your letter of the 17th inst., addressed to the Third Assistant Postmaster-general, is received. Your telegram of the 20th November, and also your communication of the 19th, giving the particulars of the robbery, were duly received, and a case made up and sent to Special Agent Carter, presuming he would give you the necessary instructions in regard to the matter. As that, however, has not been done, it will be well to send the mutilated letters to the dead-letter office, and forward to their destination any that are in a condition to be mailed.

"Hoping you will be successful in endeavoring to secure the arrest of the perpetrator of the robbery, I am, very respectfully,

Your obedient servant, R. K. SCOTT,
For Second Asst. Postmaster-general."

I also communicated the facts of the robbery to Special Agent Davis, at St. Joseph, and, at the same time, asked for advice concerning the disposition to be made of the mutilated letters, and also of the like condition of the mail-pouch. The following reply came duly to hand:

"POST-OFFICE, ST. JOSEPH, Mo., December 29, 1864.
"*F. A. Root, Esq., Overland Mail Agent:*

"SIR—In reply to yours of 27th I would say, that, without claiming any authority to give instructions in the case mentioned, I would advise that the sack and contents should be sent to the inspection office, P. O. dept., Washington, D. C. Most respectfully, your obedient servant,
WM. A. DAVIS, *Special Agent.*"

Old "Uncle John's Store." On the old overland route, during staging days, a number of years before the railroad had been built through the northern-tier counties in Kansas between St. Joseph and Marysville, a good one was told on "Uncle John," whose surname was O'Laughlin, and who was postmaster in the early days of Kansas at a ranch between Seneca and Guittard's called "Ash Point." O'Laughlin kept a small stock of goods in connection with the post-office, and over the door of his building was a prominent sign which read: "Uncle John's Store." His goods consisted of such articles as are usually needed by people crossing the plains and some of the staples required to supply the wants of the neighborhood ranchmen. One of the necessary and principal articles kept in stock and sold over the counter by Uncle John was whisky. In the early days, some of the travelers spoke of the place as a sort of oasis on the prairies.

While the civil war was in progress Congress passed a revenue law, and a stringent tax was immediately imposed on all ardent spirits. Instead of selling by the drink, it became necessary for certain dealers to dispose of the stuff in original packages only. One day it happened that Judge Nate Price, of Doniphan county—a noted Kansas character in the '60's and '70's—with a number of lawyers, were on their way to Marysville by stage to attend court. Price was then judge of the second judicial district. On reaching "Uncle John's store," and having heard the old man kept "something good to take," the jolly disciples of Blackstone suddenly become "awful thirsty." While the stage stopped for a few minutes to change the mail, the lawyers crawled out of the coach and, single-file, followed the judge into the post-office. After politely passing the time of day, the judge inquired of Uncle John if he kept anything "good to take." Being answered in the affirmative, he ordered "eye-opener" cocktails for the crowd.

Where some thirsty lawyers "practised at the bar."

"I would like to accommodate you, but I can't sell it by the drink," said the old man; adding, "Since Congress has passed this 'infernal-revenue law,' I can dispose of it only in original packages."

"Original packages be d——!" chimed in the judge; "by the great horn spoons, we must have something to drink, if we have to buy your entire outfit or a barrel. What do you want for your place? What will a barrel of the stuff cost? or, perhaps, you may have some smaller packages."

With a broad smile on his face, Uncle John reached down under the counter and brought forth a quart bottle of genuine "old Kentucky bourbon," and, for a few minutes following, those thirsty lawyers were happy practicing at the old man's "bar."

"All Good Methodists Here." While residing up in the Rocky Mountains, some years after the days of the overland stage line, I chanced to make the acquaintance of Rev. Mr. Chamberlain, of Denver, who at one time was presiding elder of the Methodist Episcopal Church for a part of the mountain district of Colorado. I found the elder a genial, warm-hearted gentleman—a

good, old dyed-in-the-wool Methodist, so to speak. He was also a Grand Army man and a good story-teller, and his stories were always Gospel truths, especially when they in a manner related to the "good, old Methodists." But he told one on himself that he said he had to tell; it was "too good to keep."

While on a private business tour of the mountains one time, it so happened that the elder was caught at Cañon City on Saturday night, unable to reach Denver, his home, to spend the Sabbath with his family. The Colorado penitentiary is located at Cañon, and some of the officials at the institution learning on Sunday morning that the "good, old Methodist parson" was in town, a polite invitation was at once sent to him at the hotel to come and preach to the convicts that morning. It was his first invitation of the kind and it was promptly accepted.

The elder, at the appointed hour, made his way to the "pen," and, thoroughly fortified with Bible truths, delivered to the few hundred convicts assembled in the chapel one of his most eloquent and appropriate sermons. After he had finished his discourse and the religious exercises were closed, he noticed that one of the short-haired fellows in striped clothes had been considerably moved by his remarks. The convict had kept his eyes on the elder from the time services began until they closed, and then came forward to greet him. He grasped the good preacher by the hand and said:

"I have listened with a good deal of pleasure, and received much valuable instruction from your able and timely discourse. It was one of the best sermons I ever heard and it has made a lasting impression on my mind. By the way, my good brother, what might be your denomination?"

"Well, sir," said the divine, "I am a Methodist."

This so pleased the convict that he quickly grasped the Gospel expounder with both hands; then, with another hearty shake, said: "I 'm so glad, my good brother, that you are a Methodist. Let me shake your hand again; we 're nearly all Methodists here."

Sioux Indian War-dance. Early one night in the summer of 1863, I was out on the plains in southern Nebraska, on my way up the Platte valley, nearly 300 miles west of the Missouri river. The night was intensely dark, but by the instinct of the animals, and by the candles that were in the lamps on either side of the front end of the coach, and which reflected a little light, we were thus able to keep the road we were traveling.

We had reached a point perhaps twenty-five or thirty miles west of Fort Kearney, when we noticed, some distance ahead of us, the light from several fires blazing up a few rods to the south of the road. The closer we approached to the locality the more distinctly could we see the forms of men. We knew they were Indians, for we could hear their hideous yelling. When we approached near the locality the driver reined his team down from a lively trot to a slow walk. We were close enough to see that the Indians were going through with what we supposed to be a part of their program. For a few minutes we looked upon the great gathering and listened to the most unearthly yells and piercing war-whoop shrieks ever heard from a band of human beings.

The driver had informed me soon after we had started from Fort Kearney, several hours before, that the Indians were having a sort of periodical powwow up the road. On this occasion it was a band of several hundred Sioux—among them a large number of warriors—who had assembled near the bank of the Platte river, and were going through with a series of performances from the program that had been outlined in one of their periodical war-dances and festivals.

A large number of their lodges were pitched in the vicinity, while the several fires they had about the premises which surrounded their wigwams lighted up the scene sufficiently to enable us to watch for a short time some of their peculiarly odd performances. Dressed in almost every conceivable costume, some of which made them look hideous, they danced in groups around the fires, thumped on some peculiar, drum-like sounding instruments, smoked the traditional "pipe of peace," hopped up on one foot and alighted on the other, flourished knives and spears and tomahawks, made speeches, and some of them chanted their outlandish sounding but to them doubtless favorite airs, keeping time to the music produced by thumping on a keg with the skin of some animal stretched over the head. To a paleface witness and listener, the scene was a sort of pandemonium.

While the exercises would perhaps be interesting for some to look upon, really there was little connected with what we witnessed that either of us could understand, much less appreciate; so we did n't care to tarry long, even had we the time, and listen

A SIOUX INDIAN WAR DANCE. *Page 868.*

to the free concert, in which they were apparently having so much enjoyment. The driver, thinking we had seen enough of the show, then gave his lead team a cut from the whip, and almost instantly we changed from a slow walk to a lively gait, only too glad to get out of hearing distance of the indescribably hideous shrieks the "noble red men" were for the time inflicting upon a few paleface listeners.

Staging in Colorado. In the early days of Colorado, during the later '50's and '60's, no place in the country excelled Denver as a brisk staging center. Routes radiated from there in all directions. The first of the lines across the plains was the Leavenworth & Pike's Peak Express; then a consolidation and change made it the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express. But the most important route was the Ben. Holladay "Overland," doubtless the greatest stage line on the globe. Daily four-horse and six-horse coaches left for and arrived in Denver from Atchison, on the Missouri river, and Placerville, at the western slope of the Sierra Nevadas. Daily lines also left for Central City and Georgetown, Colorado City, and Pueblo. Lines also in due time were opened to Breckinridge, taking in French, George, Hoosier and Nigger Gulches and the Tarryall Diggings, at the end of the line where Como is built.

Long before the wild "carbonate" excitement had reached its zenith, McClelland & Spotswood put on a line of stages to Fairplay and Leadville, going by Bradford Hill to Turkey Creek, to Bailey, and thence by the Platte to the park. One line from the park ran over the Weston Pass, "that dread terror of travelers, who never knew whether they might not be brought down on the other side refrigerated specimens for a dissecting room."

Since the founding of Denver, stage lines from that city into the mountains were operated by Ben. Holladay, Hughes & Co., McClelland & Spotswood, Wells, Fargo & Co., and Barlow & Sanderson. Jacobs & Co. ran an opposition line to Pueblo, superintended by Dug. Ayers. While McClelland & Spotswood were operating their line into Leadville, Barlow & Sanderson put on a line which ran up into the camp by the Arkansas River route. Frequently the drivers for the two companies would have a lively scrap, especially when they happened to strike the road into the great carbonate camp at the same time. The free entertainments given as the coaches came up would often be equal to a circus and far more amusing. While struggling up the street for first place at the hotel, it was great amusement to listen to the string of lively "chin music" of the drivers, standing up in their seats, yelling like savages, cracking their whips with torpedo-like effect, and a promiscuous lot of passengers inside and on top also yelling at the top of their voices.

The increase in the mails into the Colorado mining camps was unprecedented. McClelland took the contract into Leadville in 1874 for four years. For the first year it averaged 100 pounds a day. The amount continued to increase correspondingly with the growth of the camp until the last year of his contract, when it had reached 2000 to 2500 pounds a day, an amount, the department declared, that "beat the record."

Early Cripple Creek Staging. In Colorado, scattered through the mountains, there are probably more old Concord stage-coaches than in any other state or territory in the West; but since railroads have been penetrating almost every mining camp in the Rockies, most of the stages have had to go. For several years in the '90's the great gold-mining camp of Cripple Creek was one of the largest staging centers in the country. For some time daily lines of four- and six-horse Concord coaches ran in there from Florissant, Cañon City, Florence, and still another and more important line from Hayden Divide, on the Midland railway. The completion of the Florence & Cripple Creek branch of the D. & R. G. road, July 1, 1894, closed the three former stage lines. The Midland Terminal railroad reached the mining camp early in 1895, thus practically winding up the staging business in that region.

While spending a few months in the great mining camp in the summer and fall of 1894, I saw a number of the old vehicles standing in front of the company's stables on Carr avenue. All of them were in daily use when travel was brisk, before the railway had wound its serpentine course around so many mountain peaks and up through so many cañons and gulches into the camp. The first stage line into the camp was operated by David Wood, an old-timer in freighting throughout the San Juan and Gunnison mining camps. It was a double-daily line of four- and six-horse Concords. Later the line was changed to a single-daily six-horse line. Wood was succeeded by A. W. Alexander.

J. E. Hunley, of Colorado Springs, in December, 1891, put on a line of stages between Florissant and Cripple Creek, which he operated until May 24, 1892. The line was then changed to Hayden Divide (there connecting with the Colorado Midland road), where it continued to run until the Midland Terminal railway was completed to the mushroom town of Midland, December 10, 1893. After the railroad reached Gillett, July 4, 1894, the stages ran into Cripple Creek from that point. The line was purchased in December, 1893, by H. L. Kuykendall, a Wyoming stockman, who operated it until June, 1894. Then the Kuykendall Transportation Company was incorporated, and operated the stage line until it was superseded by the railroad.

Early in April, 1892, Alf. Salmon put on a line of daily stages between Florence and the gold camp. This line lasted only a few months, the manager finding it impossible to run it in opposition to the line from Cañon City. While in operation it used steel-spring coaches, vehicles greatly inferior to the celebrated coaches made by the Abbot-Downing Company, at Concord, N. H.

During the period that the Kuykendall Transportation Company operated the most important stage line into Cripple Creek it used nine coaches to carry the great rush of travel. The first line of stages over the route from the Midland railroad was operated by Hamilton & Johnson. The names of the stages in use by Kuykendall as late as 1894 are: Wm. F. Cody ("Buffalo Bill"), Keno, Frank Hunter, Chauncey Nichols, Kit Carson, Chihuahua, Monitor, James Wood, and D. C. Crawford. The Chihuahua, a fine Concord vehicle, had then been nearly twenty years in the service, and had just been laid up for repairs. Some of these coaches were old-timers, notably the Cody and Crawford, having been bought in 1865, and used on the Black Hills road in Wyoming and Dakota during the palmy days of Deadwood staging. Later they were used in Colorado, west of the "range." One of them, a magnificent vehicle, painted a snowy white, is out of a lot of twelve originally built for Potter Palmer in 1876, and by him used in Chicago between his palatial hotel and the various railway stations in the great city by the lake. It is named Keno, and each door bears a fine painting of the noted Palmer House. A number of these nine coaches were red-painted, with extra seats on top that will carry eight to twelve passengers, in addition to the three inside seats, which will comfortably carry nine.

The year 1894 was a great year for the Kuykendall Transportation Company. The company carried into and out of Cripple Creek, that year, 37,742 passengers. Besides the coaches for transporting the passengers, the company also ran every day from one to three transfer wagons, carrying baggage and express matter. The mails, which were large and kept steadily increasing, were likewise carried on the coaches. Several of the old stages were originally bought by Barlow & Sanderson, the veteran Colorado stage men, in 1876. At the early mining excitement in Leadville, in the later '70's, the coaches were put on the road and made regular trips between Cañon City and the noted carbonate camp. They were in use on that line until they were forced aside, after the completion of the Denver & Rio Grande railway into Leadville, in the summer of 1880. They were also in use for some years in the Gunnison, Roaring Fork and Grand valleys.

One of the earliest of this batch of nine coaches is the Monitor, a thirteen-passenger vehicle, which has been long years in active service. The running-gear on which it rests was originally used between Pueblo and Santa Fé over a third of a century ago, many years before the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fé road was built into the old, quaint, historic city settled more than 300 years ago by the Spaniards. For some time during the past thirty years or more, the stage that rested on the old gears ran in the Rockies between Fairplay and Leadville. After the noted vehicle had for some years been discarded at Fairplay, the running-gear was taken to Manitou, and there fitted by the El Paso Livery Company with an excursion body and a canopy top, and subsequently used several years. In the winter of 1891 it was again brought into service, and used for some time to convey passengers between Cripple Creek and the Midland railway, the first broad-guage line to build into the great gold camp.

The largest number of passengers ever carried into or out of Cripple Creek in a single day by the Kuykendall Transportation Company was on July 24, 1894, when 740 were handled. The company on that day ran ten six-horse and four four-horse coaches, besides several extra-baggage and express wagons. For several years in the early '90's, the company ran regularly a double line three times a day, often with extras. The highest number of passengers ever carried out of the camp by the stage line in a single day was something less than 300. Many times during the year 1894 it has been nothing uncommon to see fifteen to twenty-five passengers coming into the camp on a single stage three times a day from the Midland road.

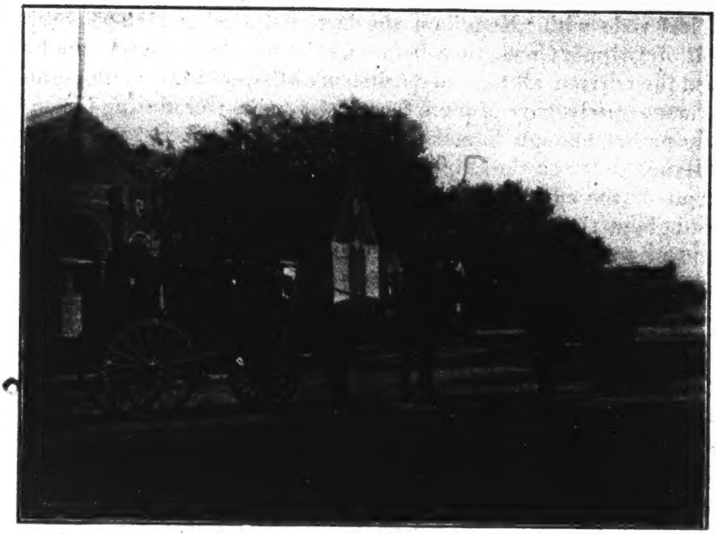
The drivers have been important factors, and have played no small part in operating the various stage lines that ran into the city of Cripple Creek since the camp was founded. In most cases the "knights of the lines" have been capable, experienced men, and have filled their responsible positions with credit to the companies they have been serving. The pioneer stage man in the camp employed as drivers Lew Hill, Oscar McCreary, Bill Bufford, and Jack Walker. Of the drivers on the J. E. Hunley line, between Florissant and Cripple Creek, there were Chas. B. Armstrong, Ed. Taylor, Dick Hanney, Art. Stewart, Ed. Dewey, Austin Coleclesser, Howard Lowe, John Foster, and Billy Gallagher. On the Florence and Cripple Creek line, the drivers were Si. Tandy and Frank Vaughn.

There were employed as drivers on the Kuykendall line, in the early '90's, Lew Hill, "Keno," Frank Hunter, Jim Hunter, Bob Griffin, Jim Woods, Harry Forsha, and Billy Wikes. Chas. B. Armstrong, better known throughout Colorado and Kansas as "Keno," is a man about forty years of age, of medium height and rather thick set. He has been holding the lines on four and six-horse teams for nearly a third of a century. For several years, when a boy and young man, he was in the employ of the Kansas Stage Company, having most of the time from 1872 to 1888, driven in southern Kansas and the Indian Territory. For a long time he has held the ribbons on some of the best stage teams in the Rocky Mountains. At the World's Fair, in 1893, for six months he drove one of the great Columbian coaches in Chicago. During his career as a stager, in the '70's, he made a daily run of forty miles in four hours. In 1877 he made a drive of twenty-six miles in two hours and fourteen minutes, with one four-horse team, stopping to change mail and watering the animals twice on the road. For one year, ending September 7, 1884, he drove a distance of seventy-eight miles six times a week, making a total of 24,414 miles. On the 3d of July, 1886, he drove a six-horse coach with fourteen passengers sixteen miles in one hour and twelve minutes. The longest drive he ever made in his long service in the stage business was in September, 1886, when, without sleep, he covered a distance of 610 miles in 119 hours. When

I last rode with "Keno" on the box of a six-horse stage-coach out of Cripple Creek, just before Christmas, 1894, he told me he had then driven, all together, a distance of over 325,000 miles—an average yearly drive of more than 13,500 miles; or, during the entire period, enough to make over a dozen trips around the world. "Keno" drove on the Cripple Creek stages almost from the settlement of the camp, and in the early '90's his name was familiar thoughout the district. If you speak of him as Armstrong, not one person in a hundred would know who is meant. A more genial, warm-hearted driver never sat upon a stage box.

A Historic Overland Stage-coach. Hon. J. Sterling Morton, one of the Nebraska pioneers, and whose home is in Nebraska City, is the fortunate possessor of one of the old Concord coaches that did service for some years on the overland route in the early staging days. The vehicle was built by the Abbot-Downing Company and purchased by Ben. Holladay in May, 1863. First it ran between Atchison and Denver, over the rolling prairies to the Platte valley; thence across the plains to the Colorado capital. Subsequently it was used on the route from Nebraska City to Fort Kearney, before railroads did the work of stages. For a number of years the old coach was the property of Geo. Hulbert, an old overland driver, and later chosen mayor of the wide-awake city of Kearney. Mr. Hulbert purchased the coach after its days of usefulness had been ended by the completion of the railroad and had it in Kearney in the '90's, where it was used on special occasions. Mr. Morton purchased it of Mr. Hulbert in 1897 and now has it in his possession at Arbor Lodge, his home at Nebraska City, but it is occasionally seen on the streets, where it is greatly admired. After being in use for nearly a third of a century, the running-gear was found to be in a perfect state of preservation, but the new purchaser had the entire coach above the axletrees reconstructed, at a cost of something more than $600. The old coach is now regarded as something of a historical vehicle, and it is a great favorite with the people of Nebraska City. Concerning its history Mr. Morton, in a letter dated October 8, 1901, says:

> "It is the identical coach that was attacked in 1864, in the Blue valley, during the last Indian raid through that region. A gentleman now in charge of the street-railways of Denver, together with his wife and servant, were the only passengers when the assault was made. The Indians were on foot, and the driver, having a good team, managed to get away from them."



Mr. Morton's historic old stage-coach. *Page 575.*

Topeka is now and has been for a dozen or more years the home of one of the old Concord coaches that was used in the days of the overland mail. It was on the plains for a long time in the '60's between Atchison and Denver, the writer having, in those early days, ridden on it a number of trips between the Missouri river and the Rockies. The old coach is now the property of Henry Tisdale, of Lawrence, Kan., superintendent of the Southwestern Stage Company. He purchased the vehicle in Denver, after the Pacific railroad put an end to overland stage traffic. Mr. Tisdale has spent considerable money on this stage-coach, having had a number of extra seats built on the top of it, and it is used by picnic parties and excursionists, as it now has a seating capacity for nine persons inside and about fifeeen or twenty outside. The coach is quite an attraction on the streets of the Kansas capital, when it is loaded with twenty or twenty-five jolly girls and boys, drawn by four or six of the finest horses for staging.

Disagreeable Insects. While on one of my trips up the South Platte in the summer of 1863, it was my misfortune, while at a point between Valley Station and Bijou creek, to encounter a cloud of sand-flies, or some kind of winged insect which perhaps might more properly be called flying ants. I noticed what appeared like a cloud ahead of us a few rods. On our approach towards it, as we were slowly moving through quite a stretch of sand, suddenly we found ourselves in the midst of the pests, before we could realize our situation. Luckily for me I had a veil in my pocket, that I carried to keep the dust out of my eyes and nose when the wind blew it so thick at times it was with difficulty we could see across the road. As soon as I could, I pulled the veil over my head and face, but the driver was not so fortunate. He was so annoyed by the pests he could not see, and I took the reins from his hands and did the driving until we were out of the reach of the insects. Of course, it was only a few rods through the swarm of tiny tormentors, but it was with feelings of decided satisfaction that we soon got out of the reach of them. I quickly thought of the old threadbare expression, "It 's enough to make a preacher swear." But I did n't do any swearing; the driver, however, swore a streak of oaths apparently the length of the overland route. Such a volley of "broadsiders" I never before heard in such a short space of time. Suddenly he ceased, I suppose from having exhausted his vocabulary. I inquired of him why he had stopped, but all he said was that he "could n't do justice to the occasion." This was the first and only time I ever met any such enemy, but I have heard that clouds of such insects were often observed by overland freighters in the '60's.

There was another pest on the plains that we all frequently encountered during the hot weather. It was what drivers and freighters called "buffalo-gnats." These insects were so small it was difficult, a few feet away, to see them with the naked eye. They were small, but they could almost torment the life out of a human being. It was not uncommon to go through regular swarms of them on the plains. While they could not be easily seen, a person would not be long in discovering their presence. Their favorite place to tackle a man was behind the ears. Several times have I had my ears so they were raw, having been bitten by the bloodthirsty insects that with difficulty could be seen except by the aid of a microscope. Small as they were, they worried the stage stock at times, and also greatly annoyed the cattle belonging to the freighters, as well as the stock in charge of pilgrims on their way to the mountains.

A First-class Liar and Imposter. It is somewhat singular the large number of men—and comparatively young men, too—who can now be found who are palming themselves off and boasting of having once been drivers on the old "Overland." Within the past few years it has been my pleasure to meet and converse with quite a number of the boys employed from time to time on the old stage line. One man whom I met had told several of his acquaintances that he was a former overland stage-driver on Ben. Holladay's line. Some of the acquaintances he had formed thought he was telling some tall yarns, for he would frequently get mixed and contradict himself. I was urged by an old friend to go and meet him. I did so, hoping that I might possibly obtain some valuable pointers by talking over old times on the plains in the early '60's.

I chanced to meet the fellow, but I had not conversed with him a minute before I discovered that he was an imposter; a first-class fraud and consummate liar. He knew the "Overland" boys, he said, from one end of the line to the other; he had an extensive acquaintance; but I soon learned that there was only one driver on the entire line whose name he could recall; he had "forgotten" the names of the boys, he said. What was still more strange, he had even "forgotten" what part of the line he had driven on, and was also unable to recall a single date concerning the time he was employed. He had even "forgotten" what years he was "employed" on the line, and between what stations he had driven. I inquired of him about a certain driver whom I knew—a short, thick-set fellow who could "tip the beam" at 200. He was "well acquainted with him" and described him as "a tall, lean fellow, weighing perhaps 125."

Then one after another, I named a half-dozen or more of my early schoolmates who had never been west of New York and Pennsylvania, neither had they ever ridden on or seen a Concord stage-coach. I was greatly surprised to learn that he knew every one of them and had "driven a long time on the 'Overland' with them." I then called off the jaw-breaking imaginary names of several fellows, and found that he knew them also and had "driven with them often."

There is not an "Overland" stage-driver employed by Ben. Holladay on his line in the '60's, and now living, who is less than fifty or sixty years of age. While this fellow's age was undoubtedly under thirty, he assured me that he was thirty-five; hence I inferred, and so told him, that he must have begun "driving on the Overland" when he was less than three years old. This was something unexpected to him. His face suddenly changed to a red-beet color. He could say nothing, and I really felt sorry for him. Taking my leave, I told him that he knew more about the "old overland-stage boys" than I did, and left him to tell his "exploits" as a driver to others.

Never out of Rattlesnake Oil. Being the starting-point west for the overland California stage-coaches in the '60's, Atchison naturally furnished many interesting incidents. During the period of four-horse Concord stages there, one of the "Overland" boys visited a prominent drug-store on Commercial street to have a few drugs, medicines, etc., put up. The customer had a memorandum from which he called, one by one, the articles as wanted, and, to each one inquired for, the druggist, whom we will call Jim Gould for short, nodded in the affirmative and promptly put it up for the customer.

"Now," said the anxious 'Overlander,' as he had reached the bottom of his list, "I want something that I do n't think can be found in Atchison."

"What is it?" inquired Jim, the druggist, anxiously.

"I want a half-pint of rattlesnake oil."

"I 've got it," quickly answerd Jim. "I always keep it; never allow myself to be out."

"Glad to hear it; but I thought I would have to send to St. Louis or Chicago for it," said the customer, greatly pleased to know he could get such an important article so near home.

Jim took a half-pint bottle, went into the back room, and, in a few minutes, returned with the "rattlesnake" (?) oil. Jim filled the customer's order and wrapped up everything neatly in a secure package, and the "Overland" customer paid the bill and departed. He had not been gone fifteen seconds before Jim turned around and with a "smile that was childlike and bland," said to me (the only person in the room beside himself): "I never allow myself to be out of anything when running a drug-store. I have everything that is wanted. I draw 'lard oil,' 'bear's oil,' and 'rattlesnake oil' out of one and the same barrel."

Poor Jim! for a number of years, three decades or more ago, he ran the finest drug-store in Atchison, but subsequently became addicted to drinking, and his love for the vile stuff finally got the better of him, and he died from its effects during the '70's.

Opening a Branch Line. Early in May, 1864, Ben. Holladay was awarded the contract for carrying the mail from Salt Lake to Virginia City, Mont., on a route about 450 miles long. He decided to stock the line at once, for every day he failed on the work, beginning on July 1, he must forfeit or pay a fine of $500. He notified Superintendent Spotswood immediately that the stock, coaches, wagons, etc., must be in Salt Lake by July 1. He must get them. It looked to Spotswood like a hopeless task, but the wide-awake, pushing superintendent took the first stage to the Missouri river, gathered his supplies and, in a very short time, had his train of 290 mules, thirty stage-coaches and ten lumber wagons together and started on the return trip. He went by the old California route, *via* Forts Kearney and Laramie. He crossed the South Platte at old Julesburg on June 2. Knowing that every day's delay after July 1 meant a big fine to his employer, who was impatient and intensely anxious, he started out on the trail, encountering delays and numerous obstacles, reaching Salt Lake City on June 29. The following day he had the coaches running on their initial trip toward Virginia City. It was a miracle that the outfit was not delayed over the limit by a big freshet in the Sweetwater, which the trail crossed three times. He decided not to wait until the high water went down, but took desperate chances, which necessitated swimming the stock and floating the wagons and coaches across the swollen river as best they could. Two days were lost in this apparently foolhardy act, but, under the circumstances, Spotswood thought it had to be done; there was no alternative.

My Lucky Escape from a "Hold-up." In the summer of 1863, the agent at Denver held the messenger coach on one of my trips a day longer than the accustomed time. Instead of leaving on that trip Tuesday morning, I was ordered to tarry another day. I could n't imagine at the time what was the reason, but I learned the morning that I started. There were nine wealthy Californians as passengers east, and they had with them a very large amount of money and other valuables. The Tuesday's coach that I did

The hold-up on the Kickapoo reserve.

not go east on was held up by masked men about midnight on the fifth day out from Denver. The hold-up took place on the Kickapoo Indian reserve, some thirty or thirty-five miles west of Atchison. None of us learned of it until we had reached a station on the Little Blue river about 100 miles west of the spot where the "hold-ups" appeared. The passengers on the stage with me were splendidly armed; they not only had each a brace of revolvers, but, among the other arms in their possession, were several short, double-barreled shot-guns. They were prepared for an emergency. All night long they held their shooting-irons in their hands, and had there been anything that looked like an attack on the messenger stage there would doubtless have been some slaughtering done. This was the nearest I ever came to being held up by highwaymen. Had I not been detained on this trip a day longer than the accustomed time at Denver, I would have been the victim on this occasion. Luckily, the coach that was stopped had only three passengers for Atchison, the others having gone east from Fort Kearney to Omaha and Nebraska City by the Western Stage Company's coach.

"*My Money, or Blood.*" Tom Oakley, in the early '60's, came into Atchison from off the stage line. He had driven a long time and a considerable sum of money was due him. He had his time-check, properly indorsed, and supposed to be as good as greenbacks, but had hitherto been unable to get any satisfaction from the company which was owing him. This was before the line had passed into the hands of Holladay. Oakley went direct to the stage office and called on the Atchison agent, presenting his check for the money. The agent carelessly put him off, telling him to call again; giving as an excuse that he was too busy just then to fix up matters with him. This way of doing business appeared to satisfy the agent, but it was not satisfactory to Oakley. He had been trying for some time to get his money, but was convinced that he could obtain no early satisfaction; so he prepared accordingly. He had a drink or two inside of him and was not in the best of humor at the time, especially as he could see that there was no immediate prospect of getting his pay. He pulled his six-shooter, and, standing in front of the agent, said he was there for business. He proposed to have his money right then, or have blood. The agent began to realize that the fellow was determined and meant what he said; so he did not argue with him. In less than three minutes the safe was opened and the amount due him handed over.

Introducing a New Style on the South Platte. Away up on the South Platte near old Julesburg, in the summer of 1863, I discovered, one morning, while west-bound, that a joke had evidently been prepared expressly at my expense. While I had been sleeping down in the front boot of the stage a few hours the night previous, in some manner that I never was able to account for, my hat was gone, when I woke up. As good luck would have it, I had purchased a "shaker" during my last trip to Atchison for the "better half" of one of the station keepers over 500 miles out in the Platte valley. Situated as I was, having no hat, and being unable to procure one along that part of the route, I was obliged to don the "shaker," which, by the way, was one of the latest style, and in that head-gear I rode more than fifty miles. To say that I was the "observed of all observers" but mildly expresses it. Every one that we met and passed, with a broad grin looked at me in amazement. One of the drivers jokingly asked his fellow driver the "name of that old granny" he had with him up there on the box. The driver was somewhat slow in giving an answer, and, to gratify the curiosity of the anxious inquirer, I confidentially informed him that I was simply the advance-guard of the "Shakers." On delivering the article to the lady for whom it was purchased, she was politely informed that she would not be the first to come out with the new style on the South Platte, as it had already been introduced.

Buffalo Bill and his Wild West Show. It is a great treat for Buffalo Bill to visit Kansas, in which state he spent so many years of his boyhood days. One of his favorite places is Topeka, the state capital, which for some time he has been visiting with his "Wild West" every two years. His last visit was on a lovely day during the closing year of the nineteenth century—October 1, 1900—on which occasion his mammoth tent was packed by thousands of his Kansas friends and admirers. Concerning his great show and the grand entree through the principal streets in the city, the Topeka *State Journal* at the time spoke as follows:

> "In the parade that passed through the main thoroughfares between ten and eleven o'clock, the world's representative soldiery and wild riders were given splendid display. From the United States Army drum corps, that led the line, to the battery of artillery that brought up the rear, the cavalcade was watched on Kansas avenue by an average show-day crowd. Sharing his seat in his spider phaeton with Colonel Cody himself, 'Buffalo' Jones was a conspicuous figure as a guest of honor, completing a brace of pioneers that is not often shown hereabout of late years. Frank A. Root, who was once an overland express messenger, rode on the old Deadwood coach with the driver. The cowboy band, mounted on white horses, was another picturesque feature. English, German, French and United States cavalry, Cubans, Cossacks, Arabs, cowboys, Mexicans, and Indians, in ornate uniforms and variegated costumes, gave much life and color to the pageant."

Some Overland Souvenirs. While I parted with my old Colt's navy revolver—traded several times for a similar gun during staging days—I still have the same little breech-loading rifle that I carried with me on the plains during all my trips, beginning in January, 1863. As a souvenir of the days of the overland mail and express line, when the Indians, for hundreds of miles and for a long time, held undisputed possession of the route, I prize the little gun very highly. I was a number of times offered fifty dollars in greenbacks for it in 1864–'65, during the period of the Indian troubles, and would not at the time have disposed of it for $500 or even $5000; but it is extremely doubtful if the gun to-day would fetch five dollars at public sale. I have quite a number of other overland staging curios; among them a buffalo robe, Indian bow and arrows, a buckskin for which I paid eight dollars, a dagger, a section rubber drinking cup, and a few other articles. While my old robe is somewhat demoralized from its long use in all kinds of weather on the plains, it is still good for service, and, if carefully used, will last for a long time to come; perhaps till there are no more buffalo living.

The "C. O. C. & P. P. Ex. Co." Quite frequently the stage boys working for the Jones & Russell company had hard work, when that corporation was being pressed, to get their money, and many of them often became discouraged. This stage company was afterwards known as the "Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express," but, having such a long name, it became necessary to abbreviate it to "C. O. C. & P. P." Bill Trotter, a wag of a driver, after waiting patiently for his money, interpreted the initials as meaning "Clean Out of Cash and Poor Pay." After waiting a long time, and having some fears about getting their money, one of the boys evolved the following lines, and, as fast as the stage traveled, they went east and west to every employee on the line between the Missouri and the Pacific:

"On or about the first of May
The boys would like to have their pay;
If not paid by that day,
The stock along the road may stray."

There is not much poetry in the stanza, but it is hardly necessary to add that it had the desired effect, for, in a short time thereafter, the long-desired checks were forthcoming.

Competition by Ranchmen for Supplying Hay and Grain. Many of the ranchmen along the route between the Missouri river and Fort Kearney, for a few years in the '60's, found the overland stage line a pretty good market for their surplus hay, oats, and corn; but, at times, there was lively competition among some of them as to who could furnish the supplies at the lowest figures and in quantities to suit the stage officials. Crops were short in 1863 all over Kansas, Nebraska, and for some distance east of the Missouri river, in consequence of which the products of the ranchmen were in demand, and prices for all kinds of feed rose to high figures. Those who then were fortunate enough to have something to sell realized large returns. The stage company, in December, 1864, paid one dollar per bushel for corn at Big Sandy, 140 miles west of Atchison, in lots of 1000 bushels.

Stopping a Run of "Slapjacks." While I was at Latham, in 1864, for some months Teddy Nichols and Bill Trotter were driving thirty-five miles from there west to Laporte, on the Salt Lake road. Two other drivers took the teams from Laporte to the next "home" station west. The boys had for some time been complaining that the regular diet at Laporte was "slapjacks," which was becoming monotonous. In short, they had all got tired of that kind of "fodder." One of the drivers remarked that it was "slapjacks from Genesis to Revelations." Finally two of the boys filled up and went on a sort of jamboree. Pulling their six-shooters, they shot several holes through the bottom of the slapjack bucket, and that, for a period of two or three weeks, as one of the drivers told it, put a stop to slapjack diet, as it was necessary to send the bucket sixty-five miles to Denver, the nearest tin-shop, for repairs.

The Eleventh Kansas Cavalry—Lieut. Col. Preston B. Plumb. Returning from Denver on my last trip across the plains by the overland stage, Fort Kearney was reached in the forenoon of the 7th of March, 1865. There I learned that nine companies of the Eleventh Kansas Cavalry, commanded by the gallant Lieutenant Colonel (afterwards United States senator) Preston B. Plumb, of Kansas, had just arrived at the fort, and were stopping a short time, waiting orders for beginning a campaign against the bloodthirsty savages in the Northwest.

The expedition under Lieutenant Colonel Plumb left Fort Riley, Kan., February 10, 1865, and, marching up the Republican river through a terrible storm, over to the Little Blue, and on northwest across the country, reached Fort Kearney a short time before the overland stage from California arrived there. His stop at this military post was brief. The soldiers under his command camped that night near the post, on an island in the Platte, the mercury the next morning indicating ten or twelve degrees below zero. Remaining here one day, Colonel Plumb started out the next morning up the south side of the Platte river until the site of old Julesburg was reached. The weather was so cold that Majors N. A. Adams and Martin Anderson and a number of others in the regiment had their ears and noses frosted.

The regiment was obliged to camp a few days at Julesburg on account of a severe storm and high water. In crossing the south fork, it was a difficult task owing to the quicksand. In getting the artillery across the river three horses were drowned and several cavalrymen received a ducking. For the wood used here by his command Colonel Plumb was obliged to pay seventy-five dollars per cord, in logs, and which had been hauled a distance of over a hundred miles.

LT. COL. P. B. PLUMB.
Photo in 1865.

Leaving camp opposite old Julesburg, Colonel Plumb went up Lodge Pole creek for some distance, and across the country to the north fork of the Platte, following the stream up to Fort Laramie, reaching that post on or about April 7. Here they stopped a few days, and a part of the command went to Deer Creek and remained in camp, and the balance of the regiment moved to Platte Bridge, about 130 miles. There was considerable fighting in the vicinity of Platte Bridge, and Maj. Martin Anderson, with a force of 250 men, engaged 1500 Sioux and Blackfeet. The fighting lasted for two days, and Major Anderson lost forty men of the Eleventh Kansas and Eleventh Ohio, but the hostiles were compelled to retreat, carrying off their dead and wounded.

This campaign was a severe and trying one. It consisted of hard marches, and often those engaged suffered intensely. The regiment at one time was on a march for twenty-four hours without a drop of water. The boys were scattered over a large territory, being detailed in squads to guard stage and telegraph lines.

Fights and skirmishes frequently occurred. Two companies —A and L—were sent to Fort Halleck under Colonel Plumb; but on arriving at Fort Laramie they joined in an expedition under Colonel Moonlight in pursuit of a large band of hostiles committing depredations east of there. After a three days' march they came upon the enemy, who surprised them, and they lost five or six men; 200 horses were stampeded and most of the command left afoot, among the number Colonel Moonlight. The troops marched back to Fort Laramie without rations, a distance of about eighty miles.

Plumb's expedition to the Northwest was to protect the overland mail and Pacific telegraph. He spent several weeks reconnoitering on the Sweetwater. The regiment was relieved in August by other troops and returned to Fort Kearney, where the various companies were dismounted, after which they were obliged to march over 250 miles along the old military highway to the Missouri river, finally bringing up at Fort Leavenworth, where they were mustered out on September 26, 1865, having been in service three years and fifteen days, the last six months being spent on the plains, in the Indian country.

Court-house Rock and Chimney Rock. There was one point, and only one, on the stage road along the South Platte between Alkali Lake and old Julesburg where, when the atmosphere was perfectly clear, we had a view of the somewhat noted Court-house Rock, perhaps fifty to seventy-five miles distant to the northwest. The "rock"—marked on some of the early atlases as "ancient ruins"—was on the level plain, not far from the north fork of the Platte. To freighters and emigrants, on their way across the plains up this stream, it was long a landmark of historic interest. John H. Clark (p. 198), who went overland to California with a company from Cincinnati, in 1852, thus wrote in his journal of the wonderful rock as he then saw and carefully examined it:

> "Now look upon the outstretched plain; is there anything more grand, more imposing or more interesting than that which you now behold? A solitary monument upon the level plain! Look at it and tell me if you are not enchanted with its beauty and its majesty. Scrutinize its huge and fair proportions, and tell me if you have fault to find. That monument, as you see by its near resemblence to an artificial structure, has been aptly called 'Court-house Rock.' From its foundation of stone to its dome-like roof, is it not a masterpiece of nature's architecture? Cannot we fancy it some

grand temple, within whose walls have worshiped, for thousands of years, the children of the great West? You have now pictured to yourself the river, the green islands, and the temple on the plains.

"Look again towards the setting sun and view that tapering spire, as it rises in a perpendicular shaft 300 feet above the green carpet of the level plains. That is called 'Chimney Rock.' The scene is now before you; take a good, long look. You will, perhaps, never again witness such a picture as the beautiful river, the green islands, such a broad, level plain, with its monuments of ages resting so quietly in the glories of the setting sun, whose more than artistic paint covers all with a golden hue. . . . Never have I seen such magnificence; Court-house Rock—a temple on the broad plain—massive, bold, and upright, an inspiration of grandeur."

The Transfer of Mails at Latham. I resigned my position as messenger on the overland stage-coach in October, 1863. During the latter part of that year, all of 1864, and until April, 1865, I was in the employ of Government, having been placed at Latham station, Colorado, nearly 600 miles west from Atchison, on the upper south fork of the Platte. Latham was near the mouth of Cache la Poudre river, about thirty-five miles from the eastern base of the Rockies, on the old Cherokee trail, which entered the mountains at Laporte. The station was sixty miles a little east of north from Denver. To Latham I was sent by the post-office department early in December, 1863, and, for nearly a year thereafter, was looking after the great overland California mail at that important junction.

Latham was a prominent stage station. Associated with the overland mail, it was one of the most important on the road. The station was the only house, the nearest one to it being about three-quarters of a mile away. In a radius of ten miles from Latham there were not to exceed ten houses, and those were occupied by ranchmen. Being the point of separation of the Colorado mail from that portion destined for Salt Lake, Nevada, Montana, California, and Oregon, naturally it was a prominent point. Neither Idaho nor Wyoming Territories had been carved out in 1864.

At Latham there arrived daily from Atchison a sack or two of mail for Denver, one sack for Fort Bridger, one (sometimes two) for Salt Lake, one each for Virginia City and Carson City, Nev., one for Placerville, one (sometimes two) for Sacramento, and nearly every day, for six days in the week, two for San Francisco. In addition there was a way mail for the principal offices along the route, to be opened at each post-office west of Marysville, on the Big Blue river, in Kansas. No paper mail from the east went overland to Placerville, Sacramento or San Francisco except that paid for at full letter rates—ten cents for each half ounce—it being all carried by ocean steamer and across the Isthmus. The paper mail for Denver and Salt Lake and for points in Montana and what is now Idaho was carried by the stage. That for Nevada, California, Oregon and Washington went from New York by the Isthmus route.

My duties as local mail agent at Latham were to take off every sack of mail from the west- and east-bound stages, note the condition of each sack, compare the tags, check off the way-mail bills, being careful to note the errors, if any, and, after signing the bill, to send it in an official envelope to the department, at Washington; also to make out a new way-mail bill, and then reload the sacks for their destination—the Pacific or Atlantic. Almost invariably there was three or four times more mail going west than there was east-bound. Usually the mail-bags for the Pacific slope filled both the front and rear boots of the stage-coach.

The Colorado mails, after reaching Latham from the east, were loaded onto the Denver stage, while those for the west went across the South Platte, the river being forded at Latham, except when the high water made that an impossibility. Coming from the west, the sacks of mail from Denver were, for the time being, deposited in my office at the station and taken to the Missouri river on the first regular daily east-bound coach from California, one of which usually left Latham immediately after supper every evening, according to schedule. When it happened that three stages were standing in front of the office at Latham at one time—the passengers waiting for a "square meal"—it was by all odds the busiest station on the road between Atchison and the Rockies.

Calfiornia Bill of Fare in 1850. Placerville (in the early days known as "Hangtown"), located at the foot of the west slope of the Sierra Nevadas, was for several years, until the summer of 1864, the terminus of the great stage line. It was also an important pony express station. Near this place gold was first discovered, in the later '40's, and for a long time it was a prosperous mining camp. In January, 1850, "The El Dorado" was one of the prominent eating resorts in the mining city. A bill of fare used in those early days has been resurrected, which shows what was then served guests for dinner at a popular eating-house in the California gold diggings. This is the way it read:

SOUP.	
Bean	$1 00
Ox-tail (short).	1 50
ROAST.	
Beef, Mexican (prime cut)	1 50
Beef, up along	1 00
Beef, plain	1 00
Beef, with one potato (fair size)	1 25
Beef, tame, from the States	1 50
VEGETABLES.	
Baked beans, plain	75
Baked beans, greased	1 00
Two potatoes (medium size)	50
Two potatoes (peeled)	75
ENTREES.	
Sauerkraut	1 00
Bacon, fried	1 00
Bacon, stuffed	1 50
Hash, low grade	75
Hash, 18 carats	1 00
GAME.	
Codfish balls, per pair	75
Grizzly, roast	1 00
Grizzly, fried	75
Jackass rabbit (whole)	1 00
PASTRY.	
Rice pudding, plain	75
Rice pudding, with molasses	1 00
Rice pudding, with brandy peaches	2 00
Square meal, with dessert	3 00

Payable in advance.

N. B.—Gold scales at the end of the bar.

A Good Shot. During a portion of 1864 it was lonesome enough at Latham station, and, for a time, matters were terribly monotonous. A score or more of those stopping there in the early part of September—when stage traffic from the Missouri river to Denver had ceased—wanted something for amusement, and they used to practice shooting their revolvers at a mark nailed on a cottonwood log a few rods south of the station. During the season thousands of shots were fired and thousands of rounds of ammunition were used up. But it is safe to say that nine out of every ten of the shots were aimed either too high or too low. It was genuine sport, however, for the most of those engaged in it. Gen. Bela M. Hughes, for a long time general counsel for the overland stage line, spent some hours at the station one day that season, and, while so many were shooting at the target, he asked for my revolver, and, shooting six times in rapid succession, offhand, hit the mark every time, and thus gained from all at the station the reputation of being one of the best shots they ever knew. Whether this success with a weapon with which he was not familiar was accidental or not, it was attributed to his skill.

Sydenham's Buffalo Hunt. Mr. Moses H. Sydenham, editor of *The Central Star of Empire*, Kearney, Neb., has an article in *The Printers' Auxiliary*, published by the Western Newspaper Union, at Omaha, (October, 1901,) in which he describes a buffalo hunt he had in the Platte valley in the early '60's. The article is very interesting and the most of it is reproduced here, as follows:

"It was, I think, in the summer of 1862. While postmaster at Fort Kearney I had used my earnings to bring out from London, England, to Nebraska, my mother and brothers and sisters, the care of my widowed mother and younger brothers and sisters being continually on my heart and mind. So I had a home built for them at the seventeenth mile point from Fort Kearney, on the banks of the great Platte river, on the direct line also of the overland stage route, and which was known as 'Sydenham's ranch.' I had secured a post-office for the young settlement, which I named Hopeville. After the family were all well settled, I used to go up from the fort occasionally to make them a visit and see if they were in need of supplies. On one of my visits home, when I had to stay over night, about daybreak the house dog began to bark furiously in front of the house. From this I knew there was either a polecat, a wolf or something else close by. I called to my brother Richard to get up and see what the dog was barking at. He went out, and there in front of the garden gate was a large buffalo. I suggested that he get the gun and go for it. He secured the rifle and went out, but the buffalo had got badly scared by the dog and had galloped off quite a distance from the ranch. He did not, however, wish to follow him, and went and laid down again. I knew that the family was about out of provisions at the ranch and it would be some time before I would have more goods on hand from Omaha, from which point I purchased my goods; so I concluded to take advantage of that opportunity to lay in a supply of buffalo meat. I got up and dressed as quickly as possible, seized the gun and started, but was informed by my brother, as I hastened off, that there was only one shot in the chamber of the gun, it being a Sharp's rifle with a magazine chamber to hold a number of balls. There being no more balls or cartridges then obtainable, I had to go with but one shot in the rifle, quite uncertain, too, as to what I might need before I got through. I did not expect to have to go more than a mile from the ranch when I started out, supposing I would have my shot at the buffalo before he got away. I I had not gone far, however, before I observed a camp of travelers about a mile west of my ranch, and they had seen the buffalo and two men had gone after it.

"This phase of things suited me exactly, especially if they would only kill the buffalo, because then, after their sport and taking what little buffalo meat they wanted, the most of the animal would be mine, to get home to the ranch after they had gone from camp on their journey. As for me, I had no fondness for any sport of that kind and never ate any kind of meat, but, as a matter of necessity, I was after it for the family at home, who did eat meat.

"The campers followed the buffalo into the sand-hills and wounded him in one of his legs, causing him to go limping along, but keeping up a good pace to get away. The men had not time to follow, so gave up the chase and returned to camp, leaving the buffalo for me to take charge of. I had not followed him far before, in another direction I saw another buffalo, and watched him until he went over the brow of a high hill. I then gave up following the wounded bufialo and made for the top of the hill where the newly discovered one had passed. There before me in a valley, not far off, the buffalo had laid down to frisk on the grass. I then noted that the direction of the wind and the position of the buffalo were both favorable, and lost no time in coming to a conclusion as to plan of action. With only one shot in my rifle, and without previous experience as a hunter of game, I had to make up in tact, boldness and courage what I lacked otherwise. The printer after a buffalo might be a case of the buffalo getting a printer.

"I went along quietly to within about a dozen paces of the buffalo, knelt down on one knee to make my aim steady and sure at a vital point, then 'Let 'er go, Gallagher.' He seemed to jump up in the air several feet, looked around to see where the trouble came from and the noise of the report of the gun, shook his great shaggy head at me, then turned and ran as fast as he could. I could see by blood drops in his tracks that he was hit. I followed him and tried to head him off toward the Platte river and the ranch, for I was several miles out in the sand-hills. I closed in on him a little too much, however, for after awhile he suddenly turned and came at me on a full run, as he now seemed to realize that I was the cause of his trouble and it was me he wanted. There was nothing to run to for cover, and it did look as though he would soon be onto me. I pulled off my cavalry overcoat to lighten my progress as I continued to run from him. To have hit him with the butt of my gun at close quarters would have been as nothing on his fur-covered thick skull; so I looked for help in another direction, and, with a prayer from my heart and from my lips for heavenly aid, that had been effective on other occasions when in trouble, I looked around to see how near he was and consider the next best move, when he suddenly stopped still, but a few rods distant from me, laid down, and soon died.

"I noted the spot as nearly as possible where he had fallen, and then started through the sand-hills back toward the Platte river and the ranch to get my brother and the wagon to haul the meat home. Before night the

whole of the buffalo was there, and for a long time, on the general bill of fare at Sydenham's ranch, was buffalo rump, buffalo tongue, buffalo ribs, buffalo steak, boiled buffalo, jerked buffalo, and dried buffalo, besides the hide and the head of the buffalo as a trophy. So my first, last and only buffalo hunt was a successful one, and that, too, remember, with only the one shot in the gun. And now I will say to my brother editors, brother printers, and even to some of the past crack buffalo hunters of the plains, get ahead of that buffalo hunt if you can."

A Rocky Mountain Stage-coach. The illustration on page 453 represents one of the old coaches that has become historic. It was built in 1868 by the Abbot-Downing Company, at Concord, N. H., and in 1893 exhibited at the World's Fair, in Chicago. It is now being preserved as a Rocky Mountain souvenir mail-coach, having some years ago found its way into the museum of the post-office department, at Washington. Here it will show to future generations the manner in which the mails were carried in the Rocky Mountains, before the first transcontinental railroad was completed through to the Pacific. Among the first vehicles to carry the mails in Montana was this old stage-coach. It was then used once a week between Helena and Bozeman, while now, by railroad, mails are carried over the same route four times a day. The old vehicle has had its ups and downs. While in service it was captured by the Indians in 1877, and recaptured by General Howard. This coach in its day has carried a number of remarkable men as passengers. Among the distinguished parties who have ridden in it in the Rockies are General Garfield, before he became President; General Sherman, on his tour of inspection in 1877, and President Arthur, while visiting Montana and the Yellowstone National Park on a tour for recreation, in 1883. When "Old Tecumseh" was its passenger, the coach, drawn by six horses, with the usual relays, made the distance from Fort Ellis to Helena, 108 miles, in eight hours, an average of 13½ miles an hour. One of the proprietors of the stage line, Mr. P. B. Clark, was on the box, and drove the entire distance. It was a feat in staging in the Rockies that has seldom been equaled.

Private Parties with Invalids. We often overtook and passed on the plains private parties with two or three conveyances—some of them containing one or more invalids—going overland to the mountains for recreation and in search of health. Their outfits would nearly always be nice spring vehicles, patterned much after the army ambulance, rigged up in comfortable shape, so the journey could be made with comparative ease. Often the parties would have tents, mattresses, camp chairs, a sheet-iron stove (gasoline stoves then were unknown), and most of the utensils for getting up a meal on short notice and in pretty good shape. Now and then, when too much fatigued from the day's journey, they would have a change and take a meal at some of the stage company's eating stations along the route. Such parties almost invariably would be provided with gun and rod, and while making the trip they would have more or less sport hunting on the plains and fishing in the streams.

Sometimes people apparently more dead than alive on starting out would become quite strong and robust while yet making the trip, frequently stopping a week or two at a good camping place, where they could enjoy themselves swinging, playing innocent games, and in the enjoyment of such other amusements as could be provided. Ladies, sometimes, who, starting on the overland journey, were too weak to eat anything but the most daintily prepared food, would be so far recuperated that they would relish a slice of ham or a cut of fat bacon before getting in sight of the mountains. Occasionally parties would be met who had taken along a cow, so they could have fresh milk three times a day, or oftener if desired. Some of the benefits of these trips may yet be obtained, and many of those invalids who go by rail to the mountains, only to come back in their coffins, would doubtless recover their health by taking the overland trip in a wagon, and thus become used to the mountain altitudes by easy stages of travel, and have the benefit of the outdoor life that is known to be the health inspirer on the plains.

Early Staging in New York and New England. In a volume entitled "A History of the People of the United States from the Revolution to the Civil War," by John Bach McMaster, it is learned that the first coach-and-four in New England began its trips in 1744. The first stage between New York and Philadelphia, then the two most populous cities in the colonies, was not set up till 1756, and made the run in three days.

"While Washington was serving his first term, two stages and twelve horses sufficed to carry all the travelers and goods passing between New York and Boston, then the two great commercial centers of the country. The conveyances were old and shackling; the harness made mostly of rope;

A PARTY OF INVALIDS IN SEARCH OF HEALTH. *Page 594.*

the beasts were ill fed and worn to skeletons. On summer days the stages usually made forty miles; but in winter, when the snow was deep and the darkness came on early in the afternoon, rarely more than twenty-five. In the hot months the traveler was oppressed by the heat and half choked by the dust. When cold weather came he could scarce keep from freezing.

"One pair of horses usually dragged the stage some eighteen miles, when fresh ones were put on, and, if no accident occurred, the traveler was put down at the inn about ten at night. Cramped and weary, he ate a frugal supper and betook himself to bed, with a notice from the landlord that he would be called at three the next morning. Then, whether it rained or snowed, he was forced to rise and make ready, by the light of a horn lantern or a farthing candle, for another ride of eighteen hours. After a series of mishaps and accidents such as would suffice for an emigrant train crossing the plains, the stage rolled into New York at the end of the sixth day. The discomforts and trials of such a trip, combined with the accidents, by no means uncommon, the great distance from help in the solitary places through which the road ran, and the terrors of ferry-boats on the rivers, made a journey of any distance an event to be remembered at the end of one's days. . . .

"At the outbreak of the second war with England, a light coach and three horses went from Baltimore to Washington in a day and a half. The mail wagon, then thought to make the journey with surprising speed, left Pennsylvania avenue at five o'clock in the morning and drew up at the post-office in Baltimore at eleven at night. . . .

"Much of the delay in land traveling was caused by the wretched condition of the highways. On the best lines of communication the ruts were deep, the descents precipitous. Travelers by coach were often compelled to alight and assist the driver to tug the vehicle out or the slough."

It is pleasant to contrast the early staging "way down East" with that across the plains on the "Overland" route. A little more than a century ago, one of the most important stage lines in this country ran between our two great commercial cities of that time, New York and Boston. Those Eastern vehicles made from twenty-five to forty miles a day; on the "Overland," in the '60's, from 100 to 125 miles were covered. A third of a century ago, or more, the line operated by Ben. Holladay, between the Missouri and Pacific ocean, made in four to six hours as many miles on the "Great American Desert" as were covered in twenty-four hours in the days of President Washington on the fast line then running between Boston and New York.

The Preacher and the Gamblers. On one of Ben. Holladay's stage-coaches bound for the Northwest, in the spring of 1862, was a load of passengers destined for Helena, Mont. The party was made up wholly of sporting men, with the exception of a clergyman. On account of a blinding snow-storm the coach, when within twenty-five or thirty miles of its destination, was obliged to lay by at a wayside cabin. The cabin was built with only one room, but a wagon cover had been stretched across, which served as a partition and divided it into two rooms. After partaking of a good, hot supper the gamblers were assigned quarters for the night in the rear apartment. Instead of retiring to bed, they decided to while away the time in a game of poker, the "ante" being fixed at twenty-five cents. Near the fire in the other end of the cabin sat the ranchman and his family, the minister, and Tom Clark, the driver. When the hour came for retiring, the preacher proposed, as was his regular custom, that he should hold family worship and the suggestion was agreed to by all in the house. The exercises began with a sacred song, in which the shufflers of the cards at the other end heartily joined. But this did not stop the game, neither did it stop the music, for, while the parson was reading a chapter from the Scriptures, the bad men started on the good, old hymn "From Greenland's Icy Mountains," shortly followed by "Nearer, my God, to Thee." Soon the party at the family fireside knelt to ask for divine care and blessing, but the supplications of the clergyman were frequently interrupted by amendments suggested by the sacrilegious party at the gaming-table. When the good man repeated the words "Give us this day our daily bread," one of the gamblers quickly yelled out, "Say, pard, strike Him for pie." At the conclusion of the prayer, the minister was surrounded by the sports, who, displaying six-shooters and otherwise intimidating him, persuaded him to join them in drinking a most villainous article of frontier poison that went by the name of whisky.

A Passenger Forgets his Wardrobe. It happened at one time that a passenger who had been traveling leisurely along the stage line discovered that he had left a portion of his wardrobe. He sat down and wrote the chambermaid to forward the article to him to his destination, but, it seems, the request came too late. The chambermaid penned to him the following:

"I hope, dear sir, you 'll not feel hurt;
I 'll frankly tell you all about it;
I 've made a *shift* of your old shirt,
And—you must make a *shift* without it."

The Old Stage-coach. Many tributes have from time to time been paid to the old overland stage, but nothing more beautiful than the following, written for the Atchison *Champion*, which appeared about a quarter of a century after the last coach had left Atchison, for so many years the eastern starting-point on the great stage line:

"There are few if any of the things of the fading past to which, in our reminiscent moods, we revert more fondly than the old stage-coach. That vehicle of travel so popular with the generations who have fallen asleep. That mode of public conveyance in the years preceding the advent of railways with their Pullman car attachments. That favorite old box on wheels and leather springs in which we rode long before the sublime pageant of power hurled us daily on wings of fire over 3000 miles of iron rail; before the lightning sounded the pæan of progress on the million-chorded lyre of human thought; before the iron barges of progress smote the abject seas like conquerors, treading the burnished emerald of the deep like sovereigns, in those now far-off days when distance was not annihilated by the modern appliance of locomotion.

"The old stage-coach! How well we remember it, and how vividly we recall its appearance, conjuring up out of the depths of memory all the experiences associated with the journeys we took in it. It seemed to us then the very incarnation of cosiness and comfort, the embodiment of all that was best in the line of transportation. It was so far superior to the old springless lumber wagon and the ox cart that we deemed it a rare luxury to have both the occasion and the means to ride in it. And how many, many miles some of us have at one time and another ridden in it. There be those yet living who came West in a stage-coach; who crossed the plains in one that started out in the early and later '50's here from Atchison, and from St. Joseph and Leavenworth. It was the best possible kind of conveyance in that primitive day.

"But the old stage-coach has ended its career—made its last trip. Here and there what remains of it stands beneath the rickety shed of some wayside inn, a relic of bygone days—weather worn, storm battered, rusty, and abandoned. Its leather springs are cracked and broken, its doors gone, its sides and back smashed in, its boot the refuge of rats and bats, its wheels bent, its axletrees twisted—a poor, forlorn remnant of its former proud and glorious self. Ghosts of a buried past now hide in it. Shades of the occupants it carried once have enwrapped it. Spectral forms of the road-agents who once surrounded it to rifle the contents of its boot now troop around it when nightly shadows enfold it.

"The old brake that so often and so faithfully checked its down-hill speed, grating out assuring harsh sounds to the traveler's ear when the road was steep and dangerous, is bent and broken and useless now. The mated steeds that drew it over long, weary, dusty miles are gone. In the seats where the worn and exhausted journeyers once slept nightmares now revel. The imperious and impressively confident driver—Bill, Hank, Joe, Dave—is gone. From his nerveless hands the lines have fallen, and the shrill notes of his horn have died away on the air of the vanished years. Poor thing! there it stands, under the old tavern shed, wrecked, dismantled, forlorn. No one hails its coming with eager, beating heart; no one weeps as it rumbles away with its precious freight of affection and friendship.

"Decay and rust settled down upon it years ago and preempted it, and a strange mustiness now dominates it. The blasts of winter have frayed its trappings; the winds of autumn have shredded its curtains. Its chains, once so bright, are tarnished with the rust of decades, but their links bind us to a well-remembered past. Its gloss, which shone in the suns that set in that far yesterday, is blurred and faded out. And all that now remains of it is a combination of broken straps, hinges, latches, steps—wheels, hubs, tires, bottom, sides, seats—all one of time's most effective and lasting collapses.

"Had it a tongue to speak, could it give utterance to its thought, what tales, what forgotten stories, it could tell; what secrets—social, commercial, political—it could divulge; what scenes and experiences it could describe; what recollections it could revive; what a history it could disclose; what a strange and eventful past it could resuscitate. But alas, it has no tongue; it cannot speak. Poor old coach! there it stands, one of the most magnificent 'has beens' of a romantic period of our lives."[*]

Opening the Union Pacific Railway. The stage-coaches furnished the rapid means of transportation all over Kansas for years before the railroads were built. Lines extended from all the important towns, and the state was fairly a network of stage routes, mostly two- and four-horse lines being the ones operated. Atchison, Leavenworth and Lawrence for a long time were the principal points, but Topeka, Fort Scott and other towns afterwards gained some prominence as stage towns. As the railroads came, and were being built across the state, many of the older stage lines were abandoned, and new routes less important were from time to time opened as occasion demanded.

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[*] No one on the plains who became familiar with the Concord coach in overland staging days will ever forget the old vehicle. The stage-coach was a thing much admired by all, for it took the place of railroads in overland transportation. The vast army of ox drivers were the most numerous and apparently among the most anxious fellows on the road to greet the old coach. On its approach they would invariably halt for a few seconds, and glance at the vehicle as it came along, quickly rolled away, steadily kept growing smaller, and in a few minutes was beyond their vision. Each ox driver managed from four to six yoke, and in his hand a whip of immense size was carried. This "persuader" he could manipulate in such a manner that the report made a noise every few seconds as loud as a pistol shot. As the stage whirled on past a long train of wagons, it seemed to be a delightful pastime for each ox driver to crack his whip as a sort of parting salute for something he greatly revered. Every day these fellows saw a stage bound east and west. They fairly worshiped it, for they knew the stage could cover almost as many miles in a day as the slow, patient oxen could get over in a week. The officers and soldiers at Fort Kearney and the several military posts beyond anxiously watched for the coming and going of the stage-coach. When not on duty, they were most always near by when the stage rolled past them. Parties made up of invalids and pleasure seekers were numerous on the plains, and crossed by their own private conveyances with mules or horses. They also watched anxiously for and always admired the stage-coach. It was to them, as it was to all others, the swift-moving vehicle that carried the passengers, mail, and express. It was important to all sojourners on the plains, for three times a week it left mail at the few way post-offices and ranches along the great highway.

Ground was broken at Wyandotte, February 7, 1860, on the Kansas Central railroad. In August, 1863, grading was begun on the Kansas Pacific railway,* at the state line. On the 28th of November, 1864, the first excursion train over the road went from Wyandotte to Lawrence. The following notice regarding the same appeared in the *Kansas Daily Tribune*, Lawrence, December 18, 1864:

OPENING CELEBRATION.

The celebration of the completion of the Union Pacific Railway, E. D., from Wyandotte to Lawrence, Kansas, will take place on MONDAY next, the 19th inst.

A train of cars will leave Wyandotte at 8:30 a. m., for Lawrence; and, returning, will leave the latter place at 2 p. m. The public is invited to a free ride.

A like opportunity will be afforded the citizens of Lawrence and vicinity on Wednesday, the 21st inst., the cars leaving at 8:30 a. m.

E. M. BARTHOLOW, Gen'l Supt.

The first time-card issued by the Union (Kansas) Pacific railway appears as follows:

UNION PACIFIC RAILWAY, E. D.

TIME TABLE No. 1.

Trains will be run as follows on and after December 19th, 1864.

WESTWARD BOUND.		EASTWARD BOUND.	
Leave Wyandotte	8:00 a. m.	Leave Lawrence	2:00 p. m.
" Kansas City	8:25 "	" Sarcoxie	2:13 "
" Armstrong	8:30 "	" Fall Leaf	2:32 "
" Secondine	9:04 "	" Journeycake	2:51 "
" Tiblow	9:25 "	" Lenape	3:07 "
" Sandusky	9:40 "	" Sandusky	3:21 "
" Lenape	9:54 "	" Tiblow	3:38 "
" Journeycake	10:15 "	" Secondine	3:58 "
" Fall Leaf	10:29 "	" Armstrong	4:31 "
" Sarcoxie	10:49 "	Arrive at Kansas City	4:35 "
Arrive at Lawrence	11:00 "	" " Wyandotte	5:00 "

C. WOOD DAVIS, General Freight Agent.

E. M. BARTHOLOW,
General Superintendent.

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*Samuel Hallett begins the grade of the Kansas Pacific railway at the state line between Kansas and Missouri, in the forest, erecting a tall post, and inscribing on the face towards Missouri the word "SLAVERY," and on the face towards Kansas the word "FREEDOM."—*Wilder's Annals.*

In the *Kansas Weekly Leader*, Topeka, December 28, 1865, appears the time-card issued by the Union Pacific railway, E. D., after the road was finished to Topeka. The line was better known at that time as the Kansas Pacific railroad. Now that thirty-five years have gone by since the great road was finished from Kansas City to the capital city of Kansas, the card is deemed to be of sufficient historical interest to reproduce it in this volume. It is as follows:

UNION PACIFIC RAILWAY, E. D.

On and after January 1st, 1866, Trains will run to and from TOPEKA as follows:

Arrive at 11:30 a. m.
Leave at 1:30 p. m.

Making connections at Tiblow with Kansas Stage Co.'s coaches for

LEAVENWORTH,
ATCHISON and
WESTON,

And at Kansas City with Missouri Pacific Road for ST. LOUIS.

Going West, connects with Kansas Stage Co. for all points, and with BUTTERFIELD'S OVERLAND COACHES for

Colorado, Montana and *New Mexico.*

R. H. SHOEMAKER, Sup't.
J. H. EDWARDS, Gen'l Tk't Ag't.

The "Santa Fe Route." On the 13th of June, 1860, ground was broken at Atchison for the Atchison & Fort Union railroad (now the Santa Fé) during a celebration held there on the completion of the railroad from St. Joseph to Atchison. The breaking out of the civil war, early in 1861, however, retarded the construction of the road. On the 3d of March, 1863, Congress granted lands for the Santa Fé and other Kansas roads. On the 9th of February, 1864, the Government land grant of 6400 acres per mile was transferred to the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fé Railroad Company, and on the 17th of that month the first officers of the company were elected. On July 28, 1865, a meeting was held in the interest of the road at Topeka, at which the counties of Atchison, Jefferson, Shawnee, Osage, Lyon and Chase agreed to vote bonds at an election called for September 12. The following month Mr. T. J. Peter began construction work on the road, at Topeka, On March 30, 1869, the first locomotive for the new road—named the C. K. Holliday—was on the track and passed over the Kansas river bridge at Topeka. In July, 1869, the track was laid to the coal-mines at Carbondale, and this called for the following advertisement, which appeared in the *Kansas Daily State Record* June 24, 1869:

NOTICE.

SUPT'S OFFICE, A. T. & S. F. R. R. Co.,
TOPEKA, June 23d, 1869.

The above Railroad will be open for business MONDAY, JUNE 28th, 1869, between TOPEKA and CARBONDALE, at which point trains connect with stages for BURLINGAME and EMPORIA.

Trains will run daily, (except Sunday), as follows:

Mixed train, leaves Topeka at........	6:15 a. m.
Arriving at Carbondale................	7:45 "
Passenger, leaves Carbondale........	10:10 "
Arrives at Topeka.......................	11:30 "

Connects with east and west trains on Kansas Pacific.

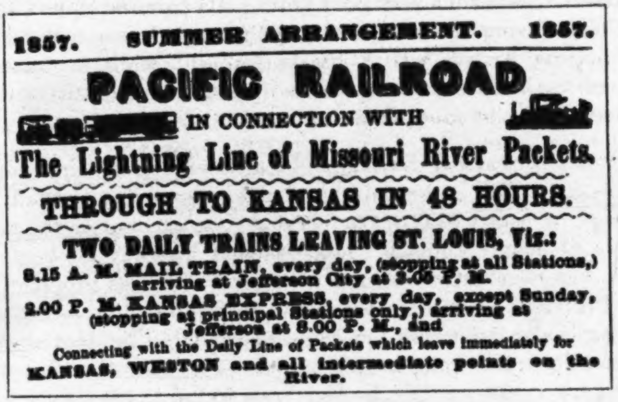
Returning, leaves Topeka at..........	1:00 p. m.
Arriving at Carbondale at............	2:00 "
Mixed train, leaves Carbondale.....	4:00 "
Arrives at Topeka.......................	5:40 "

T. J. PETER, Superintendent.

In September, 1869, the road reached Burlingame. On July 20, 1870, the track was laid to Emporia, and, on the 17th of September following, the event was fittingly celebrated by the opening of the road to that thriving city. Work did not stop, however, but the line was steadily pushed forward to the southwest—crossing the state diagonally from near the northeast corner to the southwest, across the southeast portion of Colorado, and through New Mexico, Arizona and California to San Francisco. The road has gone south, and runs its own cars into Galveston and the City of Mexico. The "California limited," one of the most elegantly furnished passenger-trains in the country, runs over the great Santa Fé from Chicago to the Golden Gate. No other road in the United States has made more rapid strides. Probably no road in the world excels it in magnificent equipment and judicious management.

JUST before starting from Kansas on his overland journey by stage-coach, on May 20, 1859, Horace Greeley, in a letter to Charles A. Dana, then editor-in-chief of the New York *Tribune*, wrote: "Rain—mud most profound—flooded rivers and streams—glorious soil—worthless politicians. Such is Kansas in a nutshell."

The Missouri Pacific Railway. Ground was broken for the "Pacific Railroad of Missouri" at St. Louis July 4, 1850. In 1857 the line was opened as far west as Jefferson City. It may be of interest to the present generation to note the summer time-card of this road at that date. Here is a *facsimile:*



1857. SUMMER ARRANGEMENT. 1857.

PACIFIC RAILROAD

IN CONNECTION WITH

The Lightning Line of Missouri River Packets.

THROUGH TO KANSAS IN 48 HOURS.

TWO DAILY TRAINS LEAVING ST. LOUIS, Viz.:

8.15 A. M. MAIL TRAIN, every day, (stopping at all Stations,) arriving at Jefferson City at 3.05 P. M.

2.00 P. M. KANSAS EXPRESS, every day, except Sunday, (stopping at principal Stations only,) arriving at Jefferson at 8.00 P. M., and

Connecting with the Daily Line of Packets which leave immediately for **KANSAS, WESTON** and all intermediate points on the River.

PARAGRAPHS.

THE great overland trail, along which the mighty traffic of the plains moved, was built from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Kearney in 1849. Early in the '50's, following the California gold excitement, St. Joseph quickly grasped the situation, and built a road from there which intersected the overland near the eastern border of the Kickapoo Indian reservation, and, a few years later, shortly following the Cherry Creek gold discovery, in 1858, the "Parallel" wagon road was built due west from Atchison. This road intersected the main highway three and a half miles west of Atchison, at an old Mormon camping spot familiarly known in that vicinity as "Mormon Grove." Thus, in less than twenty-five miles west of the great bend in the Missouri river, the roads leading from three important outfitting points—Atchison, St. Joseph, and Leavenworth—separated less than 100 miles—came together. This trail, during the civil war, was undoubtedly the most extensively traveled frontier wagon road in the country. To get from Fort Kearney to St. Joseph a distance of 273 miles must be covered. Being a great military post, Fort Kearney was one of the most important stage stations between the Missouri river and the Rockies. Owing to the vast traffic on the plains, it almost always appeared busy around the stage company's office and near the old military headquarters. Here, and a few miles east in the Platte valley, the various wagon roads from Leavenworth, Atchison, St. Joseph, Nebraska City and Omaha all united, naturally making it a very busy point. Its palmiest days were in the '60's, during the civil war, some years before a railroad was running on Kansas and Nebraska soil, and while an unprecedented business was being carried on in the way of overland transportation by mules and oxen.

HOLLADAY carried the overland mail nearly all the time during the period which embraced the civil war, receiving annually an average of nearly $1,000,000 therefor. On account of the many bands of hostile Indians and occasional highway robbers, the work was constantly attended with peril. He was promised by the President of the United States both protection in carrying the mails and indemnity for losses incurred, but the Government shamefully treated him in this matter. For more than ten years before his death, in 1877, he had been trying to get a settlement on account of his losses by Indian depredations, which aggregated several hundred thousand dollars, but he never succeeded in getting a cent. While he received a large sum quarterly for transporting the mail, his running expenses were enormous, and he died practically a pauper.

SOME rather amusing scenes were now and then witnessed. I remember one at old Julesburg in the summer of 1863. While one of the stock tenders was scratching himself quite lively, a Jew passenger who had just come in from the west, and was eagerly watching matters, said to the driver: "Mine vriend, you appears to be droubled mit vleas." "Fleas! fleas! fleas!" quickly answered the busy driver, "Do you take me for a d—— dirty dog? There 's no fleas on me; them 's lice!" and the conversation was suddenly brought to a close.

UNAUTHENTICATED claims place the date of probable discovery of Great Salt Lake at about 1820, by a French trapper named Provost; also, that William N. Ashley preceded Jim Bridger, having, in 1825–'26, led a company from St. Louis through the South Pass. (See sketch of Bridger, page 475.)

Horace Greeley arrived at Salt Lake City, Sunday, July 10, 1859. On Saturday evening, the 16th, he was given a reception and banqueted by the Deseret Typographical and Press Association. He spoke half an hour, and, in his plain and peculiar style, referred to the progress the world had made during his recollection; remarked how extraordinary had been the increase of facilities for the spread of knowledge through the press and by means of the electric telegraph, and stated that he "looked forward to a day when still greater improvements would be made—when the daily newspaper, printed from continuous rolls, cut and folded by steam, would be thrown off ready for distribution at a rate far exceeding that of the rapid eight- and ten-cylinder presses then in use; and when the telepraph would connect, through one grand electric current, continent with continent and island with island, till every corner of the earth should be illumined with telegraphic communication."

Although the stage at times was considerably delayed by almost impassable roads, caused by fearful rain- and snow-storms, yet it was seldom the old Concord ever laid by. There was little or no rest for the favorite pioneer passenger vehicle of the plains. Rain or shine, night or day, surrounded by violent thunder-storms and piercing blizzards, with passengers, mail and express in charge of the experienced and fearless driver, the coach must be kept a going. Steadily it lumbered along the overland highway. Its course was over rolling prairies, along beautiful valleys, through stretches of sand and alkali, up and down the rugged mountain sides, across dangerous passes of the "Great Divide." In making the trip, it was often necessary to ford roaring torrents, as the stage, hitched behind spirited steeds, sped towards its destination at the western slope of the Sierra Nevadas.

Most of the stations along the old trail built in the later '50's and early '60's were of plain logs, and some of them were rather primitive in construction. It was seldom that a station was seen in those days above one story in height. In building them, poles or split logs were used for rafters. The rafters were covered with brush; then a thick layer of hay; finally sod or loose earth. When it could be found, a sprinkling of coarse gravel nicely covered all. Two rooms sufficed in most cases. Most of the "swing" stations had but one room. Sometimes, at the regular stations, there would be a small kitchen in the rear. Where there were three or four rooms, the partitions almost invariably were of muslin; the ceilings were also covered with muslin; and muslin was tacked around on the sides and ends of the interior of the building—giving the premises a rather cozy appearance. Muslin sufficed for plastering, and thus proved an important staple the entire length of the stage line.

In Adams county, Nebraska, just east of Kearney county, the first Fourth of July celebration was held at Liberty Farm, in 1871, on the Little Blue river, near the location of the old overland stage station, in early days, and not far from where the horrible massacre by Indians occurred in the summer of 1864. The settlers of Clay, the adjoining county on the east, united with the liberty-loving citizens of Adams county, and joined in the patriotic exercises. Although the region was only sparsely settled, about 150 persons were present, nearly the entire population turning out and participating. An oration was delivered by a preacher, a bountiful repast was prepared and served by the ladies, enlivening music was discoursed, and the festivities wound up with a dance.

When overland freighting traffic out of the Missouri river towns began to diminish, in the later '60's, the parties who had so long been engaged in the business commenced to realize that the iron horse surely had invaded the great Platte Valley, that it had virtually preempted the old route across the plains, and was about to stop, forever, the transit of ox and mule trains. Not only had the railroad badly crippled their occupation, but it was steadily shortening the stage route. Soon it put an end to that mode of transportation, and the old wagon highway on which the overland stages ran between the "Big Muddy" and the boundless ocean eventually became a trail of the past.

"Shanghai," who is mentioned in a foot-note at bottom of page 519, is the original of the character *Shang* in John J. Ingalls's "Catfish Aristocracy." He moved from Marysville to Sumner, a town in Atchison county, and lived there until the time of his death. It was during Shanghai's residence at Sumner that Mr. Ingalls got acquainted with him.

THERE was marked contrast between some of the stations where the stage, owing perhaps to an unavoidable delay, was forced to stop with its passengers, who, being hungry, desired to eat. A few of the stations had not a chair about the premises, and rough board benches were made to serve instead; others utilized soap boxes and cracker boxes to good purpose; while yet others embellished nail kegs with pieces of buckskin or buffalo robe tacked over the head, that furnished apparently comfortable seats. While more useful than ornamental, they were decidedly preferable to some of the dilapidated wood chairs to be found at a few of the primitive "swing" stations on the upper South Platte and farther to the Northwest, among a number of the stopping places along the stage route in the Rockies.

THINGS have greatly changed since the "Overland" days. Then it was an easy matter for the stage boys to get their drinks or find a place to gamble. To do this they did n't have to sneak around to some back door for an "eye-opener" or to "buck the tiger." Such indispensable (?) requisites were always in plain sight; in short, one of the first things noticed after stepping inside any of the pioneer theaters, "free-and-easy" variety halls and promiscuous dance-houses in the mining camps was a bar, convenient to which were numerous gambling devices as side attractions, fitted for alluring the visitors.

IN THE later '50's George Chorpening operated the first regular stage line between Salt Lake and Sacramento, while Russell, Majors & Waddell were at the head of the line making trips once a week between St. Joseph and Salt Lake. The through California letter mail was then being carried twice a week between St. Louis and San Francisco on the southern route by John Butterfield, the New Yorker, but the bulk of the vast mail for the Pacific, consisting of papers, public documents, books, etc., was sent from New York around by the Isthmus on an ocean steamer, the schedule being twenty-three days.

THE name of Camp Floyd was changed to Fort Crittenden early in 1861, by order of Col. Philip St. George Cooke, who became post commander after General Johnston had left the camp for the nation's capital.

In the palmy days of overland staging, in the '60's, Salt Lake City was the favorite half-way stopping place between the summits of the two lofty mountain ranges between the Missouri and the Pacific. It was virtually an "oasis in the desert." Passengers traveling the route by stage-coach always enjoyed stopping at Salt Lake, for, on the long, tedious journey, they could nearly always get rest and find everything they wanted in the beautiful city so charmingly nestled under the shadow of the Wasatch range, and only a few miles from the great lake after which the city was named.

While making an overland trip in the stage-coach, in the summer of 1865, Hon. Schuyler Colfax, in a speech he delivered at Salt Lake City, in the latter part of June, speaking of the Indians, said: "If I ever had any particular love for the 'noble red man,' it is pretty much evaporated during this trip. I do not think as much of him as I did. They were looking down from the hills at us, as we have since learned, and, had it not been that Mr. Otis and I had our hair cut so short at Atchison that it would not have paid expenses to be taken even by the Indians, they might have scalped us."

CHAPTER XXV.

RETROSPECTIVE.

FEW people living on the frontier thirty to forty years ago, in overland staging days, dreamed that they would live to see the time when a railroad would be running over the uninhabited region then known as the "Great American Desert." For a distance of over 650 miles—between the Missouri river and the Rocky Mountains—the road nearly the entire distance as traveled by the stage was often a moving panorama of white-covered wagons loaded to their full capacity—a majority of them drawn by six yoke of oxen, the balance by four to six horses or mules. Most of the vehicles were known in their days as "prairie-schooners." In them were transported, from the prominent outfitting points on the Missouri river—Kansas City, Leavenworth, Atchison, St. Joseph, Nebraska City, and Omaha—hundreds of thousands of tons of freight, a goodly portion of it merchandise destined for Denver, the "Queen City of the Plains."

To satisfy myself of the extent of the traffic on the plains at that time, I counted in a single day, along the Platte, in the summer of 1864, nearly 600 freight wagons bound for Denver, Salt Lake, Bannock, and other Western mining camps. While riding seventy miles, on the 18th of June that year, making a trip from Denver down the Platte, I counted, from the box of the stage-coach, a much larger number scattered at intervals along the road going east and west, the most of them drawn by four to six yoke of oxen, or from four to six horses or mules.

Those early days during that enormous traffic were the liveliest times ever seen on the trails leading across the plains. The great overland rush to California, following the gold discoveries in 1848–'49 could in no way be compared to it. The travel by stage was immense, although a great many—probably ten times the number—went across by private conveyance. It was during the civil war. At that time vast quantities of army stores were being transported by mule teams to Forts Kearney, Laramie, Bridger, Douglas, Hall, Union, and other military posts. Besides, large amounts of machinery were shipped to the various mining camps in the Territories of Colorado, Utah, and Montana. It appeared at the time as if nearly every one had money, and few persons who were willing to work were found idle. Still, there were many idle people, a great many having gone to the mines in the northwestern territories to avoid enlisting, and then having been drafted, being obliged to go to the seat of war.

Greenbacks on the plains, during the rebellion, were practically the only currency used. They were known by some of the enemies of the Government as "Lincoln shinplasters." At one time during the summer of 1864, when compared with gold, this currency dropped down to 33⅓ cents on the dollar. The outlook was decidedly blue; closely following this came the Indian outbreak, extending along the Platte for over 300 miles. In consequence, the price of flour, grain, provisions, dry-goods, clothing, shoes, etc., rose to fabulous figures. The cost of an ordinary meal of victuals at a stage station on the upper South Platte, which was seventy-five cents in 1863, rose to two dollars the latter part of the summer of 1864. While this price appeared to be steep, the most of those who ate paid it as willingly as if the price were only "two-bits."

The stage fare between Atchison and Denver was suddenly advanced to more than double the original price. There was no advance, however, in the charges for excess baggage; the price remaining at what it would appear at this late day the exorbitant rate of one dollar a pound. Sometimes passengers for Denver would have as much as 100 pounds of excess baggage.

That period, it should be remembered, was several years before there was a railroad on the old stage route between the Missouri river and Denver. Few people now traveling across the plains in luxurious drawing and dining-room and palace sleeping-cars have the remotest idea of the days of overland staging, for a period of nearly ten years in the '50's and '60's, when it was called a pretty quick trip if only six days and nights were spent in the old stage-coach between the Missouri river and the Rockies, eleven days to Salt Lake City, and seventeen days on the road from Atchison to Placerville. Now, by the Union Pacific's "Overland Limited," the time is three and a half days from Chicago to San Francisco; four and a half days from San Francisco east to New York.

Those early days of staging overland was considered fast traveling on the plains; but I made the journey once between Denver and Atchison in five days and eight hours; one of the quickest regular trips ever made between the Missouri river and the mountains by the overland Concord stage. The fastest time on this trip was made while moving down the Little Blue river, in southern Nebraska, with fourteen passengers, beside the driver and myself—fourteen miles in fifty-two minutes—over a gently rolling prairie country. That fourteen-mile ride was the fastest time I ever made on the old stage-coach during thirty-two trips across, before the advent of the iron horse in Kansas and Nebraska. Of course there were occasions when faster time was made on important special runs. Two weeks was the time occupied in making a round trip between Atchison and Denver, when I was, in 1863, employed on the great stage line in charge of the express and later of the overland mail. During that time the messengers would lie over two days in Denver, to get needed rest. After returning from a trip there was a seven days' lay over in Atchison; the distance traveled in a round trip of twelve days' continuous riding—six days and nights each way—being a little over 1300 miles.

To look back and contrast the old overland freight and stage route with what can now be daily witnessed appears much like a dream. A railroad on the Kansas and Nebraska prairies, and across the plains of Colorado to Denver, and on over the Rockies, was hardly thought of during the early staging days, although Horace Greeley, the *Tribune* philosopher, had, for a number of years previous, been advocating the building of a Pacific road as a Government necessity. That, perhaps more than anything else, was why the distinguished journalist made his overland journey to California in the summer of 1859.

While on his trip across the continent by stage, Greeley wrote a series of letters for the *Tribune*, in which he urged, more earnestly than ever before, the building of the long-talked-of Pacific railroad. It must have been a great consolation to the founder of the noted paper to live to see, in less than ten years after that long and tedious stage trip, the great undertaking that he had agitated for a dozen years or more at last finished, and palace sleeping-cars running from ocean to ocean.

At the close of the first quarter of a century after the completion of the pioneer transcontinental railway, it is found, on looking at the maps, that there are no less than seven different trunk lines of road running the most elegant cars made across the continent, with their western termini on the Pacific shore.

In 1869 the first railroad speech in Denver was delivered by George Francis Train. The following year—June 24, 1870—the first railway passenger-train on the Denver (Union) Pacific entered the city from Cheyenne, on which occasion a silver spike was driven by the Colorado territorial governor, Hon. John Evans. This important event was the closing, for all time, of the ox and mule freighting business on the plains. For a dozen years it had made the overland route, on the right or south bank of the Platte, a long line of white-covered prairie-schooners, and the number of wagons aggregated, during the later days, many thousands annually.

That period of ox freighting will be remembered by scores of living witnesses as the good old days on the plains, the like of which will never be seen again. It was during the period of Indian occupancy, while the shaggy bison roamed in countless millions over western Kansas and Nebraska; and while the most gigantic war that the world has ever known was raging, between the North and the South, that the change was made.

Denver and a dozen or more surrounding Colorado mining camps, even at that early day, furnished business for an immense overland traffic. At that time Denver—the "Queen City of the Plains"—had a population of about 3000 people, and there were not to exceed a score of three-story buildings in the city.

There was considerable strife in the later '60's between Atchison and Denver—each with about the same population—to see which place could first number 5000 people; or if they both could reach the 5000 mark at the census taking in 1870. Neither place reached the desired mark. In 1880, however, Denver had grown to be a metropolis of 40,000; in 1885, of 80,000; while, at this time* the population is put down at something like 165,000—a most remarkable growth when it is remembered that the first building on the town site was erected in the summer of 1858.

More than a third of a century has gone by since the last Concord stage-coach on the great overland route made the long trip between the Missouri river and the Pacific slope. For a period of at least ten years, in the '50's and '60's, no wagon road in the country, away from the railroad, ever had such a promiscuous and busy throng. On the great military highway, besides the mail-coaches going east and west, there was an almost constant string of the heaviest wagons, drawn by thousands of mules, oxen, and horses, pushing their way steadily across the plains. The white-covered prairie-schooners, in many places extending for miles, lined the mighty thoroughfare, along which then moved the commerce of the plains. Many of the ponderous vehicles were loaded with almost everything known in merchandise, which was being transported to the military posts on the frontier and to the towns and cities from time to time springing up on the seemingly boundless domain between the Missouri and the far western shore. It required thousands of wagons at that time to supply the various camps then being opened in the Rocky Mountain mining region, while immense numbers of teams were steadily employed in hauling purchases to the ranchmen and trading posts constantly being opened along the Platte and its numerous tributaries.

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*October, 1901.

Few people then personal witnesses would care to live over again those eventful days, especially the most exciting ones which were spent on the plains in 1864–'65. The recollections of the stirring events of those memorable seasons along the Platte, which were so exciting, are still vivid in the minds of many. No one then residing on or traversing the plains will have the least desire to witness a repetition of some of the thrilling scenes of those early days.

During the years that the great stage line was in operation and carrying overland mail, in the '60's, I was for four years in some manner associated with the vast enterprise. It is quite natural, therefore, that I should feel some pride in the fact that I personally helped load, on the old Concord coach, at Atchison, more than forty years ago, the first daily overland mail that left the great bend of the Missouri river for the shores of the Pacific.

So, we come now to bid adieu to the old days, the days of pioneers—of pioneer effort and enterprise. In the light of our advance, they were days of small things; but pervading those early efforts were the distinctive American characteristics. Such system, such speed steadily held over long distances, had not been before known. There is not another country on the globe but would have been satisfied for at least a century with the progress attained on the plains in 1865. To the American, that progress was but the preliminary step to such further development as this drowsy old world had not dreamed of. Mr. ROOT found the plains country west of the Missouri the home of the buffalo; now it is the land of the Shorthorn. In his day it was the land of the ox train, the mule team, the pony express, the stage-coach; now we have had the railroad, the fast freight, the telegraph, the Pullman palace-car, until they are regarded as a matter of course and cease to cause comment. When he went out to cross its prairies and plains it was the home of wandering and savage tribes; now it is the home of happy millions with an advanced civilization. In the days of his labor food was transported to the pioneers at immense cost; now this same land is one of the principal granaries of the world. In his day the land was a wilderness of wild grass; now the harvest waves profuse and golden to the western limits by the blue shores of old ocean. His were the days when

"Stunted birches
Hugged the shallow water line."

In forty years what changes!

"Into loam the sand has melted,
And the blue-grass takes the loam,
Round about the prairie home;
And the locomotives roam
Over landscapes iron-belted."

"Deeper grows the soil and truer;
More and more the prairie teems
With a fruitage as of dreams;
Heavier, deeper, flow the streams,
Blander grows the sky and bluer."

In the old days the wolf howled where now the schoolhouse stands, and the treacherous savage laid his ambush where we have built tabernacles and the temples of justice.

The new century has come with its new problems, but here in the West we have yet work to do along the pathway of civilization blazed by heroic pioneers. It is broad, sharply defined, capable of infinite expansion. We will walk in it. The foundation is deep, and we will build on it. The old days were glorious, but they are gone into the eternities. Here, with gratitude, with reverence, with emotion, we say to them, Farewell!

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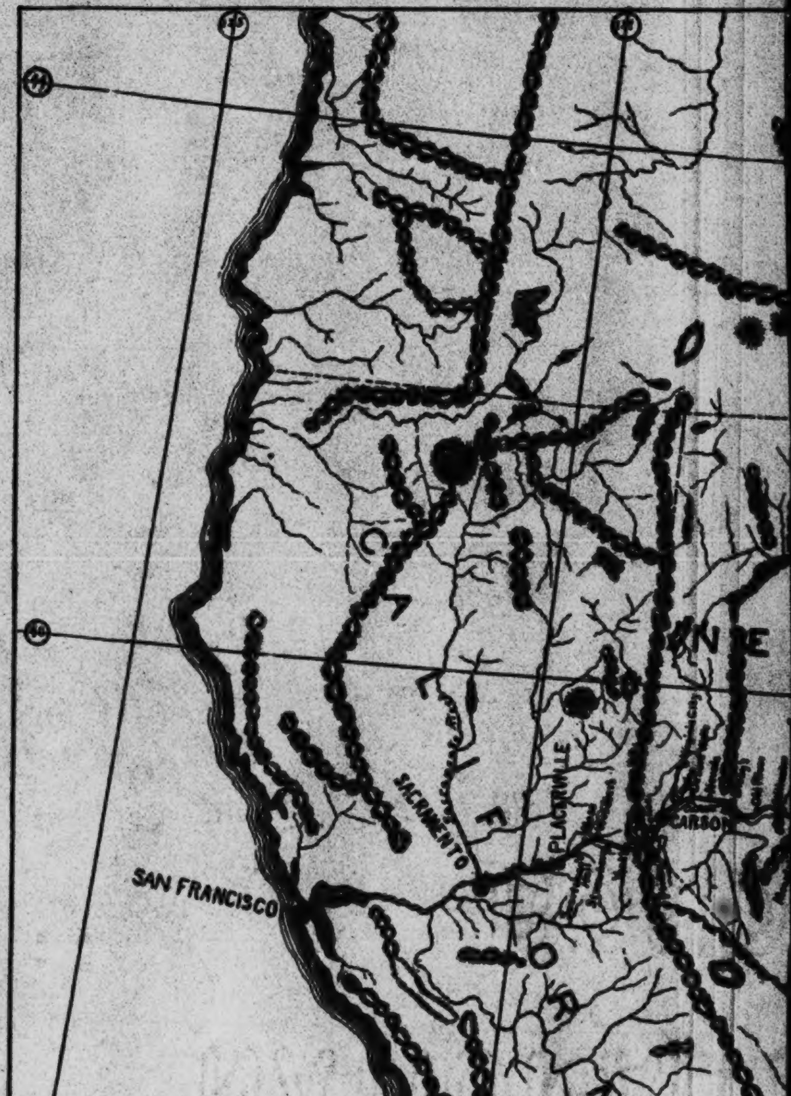

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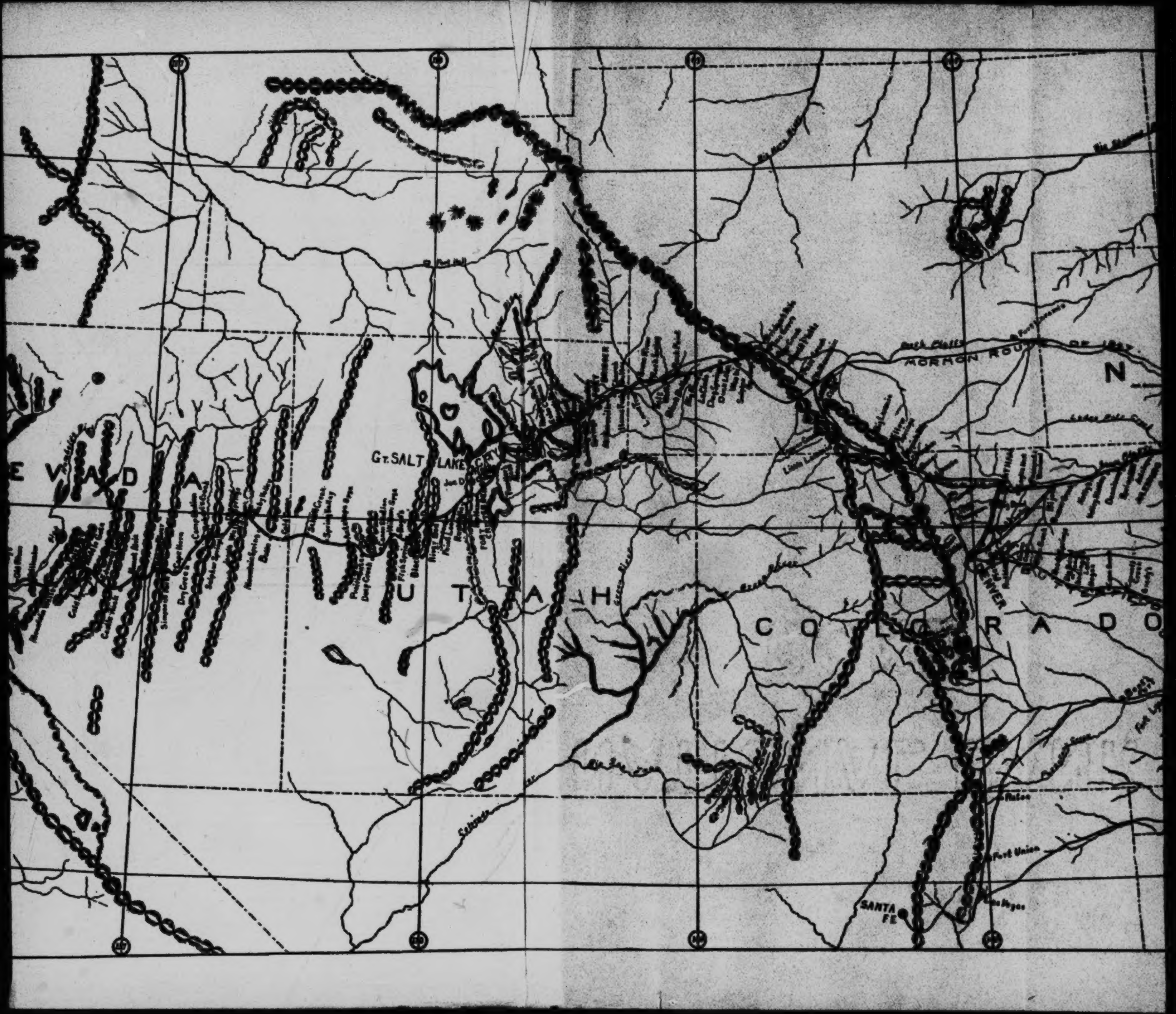
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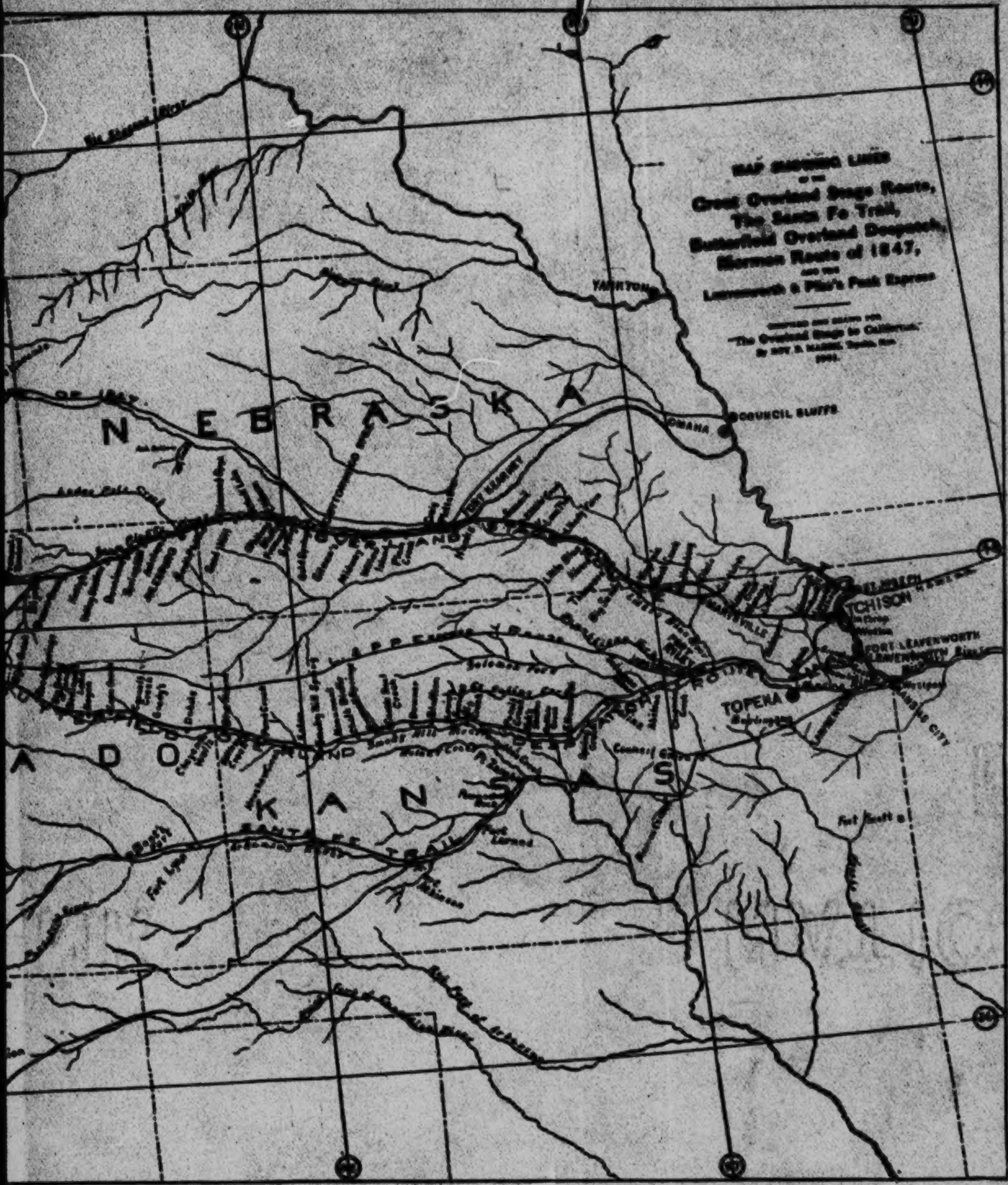
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